Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 89

The *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* as Handbooks to Eternity

Exploring the Gnostic Mysteries of the Ineffable

Erin Evans

BRILL

The *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* as Handbooks to Eternity

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By

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LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Evans, Erin, author.
The Books of Jeu and the Pistis Sophia as handbooks to eternity : exploring the gnostic mysteries of the ineffable / by Erin Evans.
pages cm – (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean studies ; volume 89)
ISBN 978-90-04-28446-3 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-90-04-30119-1 (e-book) 1. Books of Jeu. 2. Pistis Sophia. 3. Gnosticism. I. Title. II. Series: Nag Hammadi and Manichaean studies ; v. 89.

BT1390.E935 2015
299'.932–dc23

2015021716

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0929-2470
ISBN 978-90-04-28446-3 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-30119-1 (e-book)

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Abbreviations

1 En	*1 Enoch* (*Ethiopic Apocalypse*)
1 Jeu	*The First Book of Jeu*
1 PS	*Pistis Sophia*, Book One
2 En	*2 Enoch* (*Slavonic Apocalypse*)
2 Jeu	*The Second Book of Jeu*
2 PS	*Pistis Sophia*, Book Two
3 En	*3 Enoch* (*Hebrew Apocalypse*)
3 PS	*Pistis Sophia*, Book Three
4 PSa	*Pistis Sophia*, Book Four (Part One)
4 PSb	*Pistis Sophia*, Book Four (Part Two)
AdvHaer	*Adversus haereses*
Allogenes	*Allogenes*
ApJohn	*The Apocryphon of John*
Cels	*Contra Celsum*
GosEg	*The Gospel of the Egyptians*
GosJud	*The Gospel of Judas*
GosPhil	*The Gospel of Philip*
GosThom	*The Gospel of Thomas*
HypArch	*The Hypostasis of the Archons*
Keph	*The Kephalaia of the Teacher*
Marsanes	*Marsanes*
Meta	*Metamorphoses*
OrigWorld	*On the Origin of the World*
Pan	*Panarion*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PGM	*Papyri Graecae Magicae*
StelesSeth	*The Three Steles of Seth*
TrimProt	*The Trimorphic Protennoia*
TriTrac	*The Tripartate Tractate*
Zost	*Zostrianos*

Introduction

The *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* are Coptic Gnostic texts that were brought to the West over 200 years ago. In this time, relatively little scholarly attention has been given to them, particularly in comparison to the scholarship surrounding the texts of the Nag Hammadi library, discovered less than a century ago. Although these texts are largely recognized as closely related to one another, they have received only cursory discussion—primarily relating to the *Pistis Sophia* alone, or very brief overviews skimming the contents of both—and there have not been any systematic treatments of their whole contents or context since the discovery at Nag Hammadi.

This book will fill this gap in scholarship. It presents the case that the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* are representative texts from a distinct Christian Gnostic group or community. Analyzing each text in turn, it will show that although each work has distinctive attributes, demonstrating development of ideas and reflecting a changing cultural environment over time, this body of texts does in fact present a relatively consistent system of cosmology, theology, and ritual practice. It examines the wide variety of syncretistic elements woven into the system, and paints the picture of a group working to gain followers in a competitive religious environment.

1 What is "Gnostic?"

This book refers to the texts in question as Gnostic. This is a contentious term; many books and articles have been written about what "Gnosticism" might be, or what constitutes a Gnostic group or ideology.[1] Despite the wide variety in opinions on what it means for a text to be Gnostic, however, on the occasions they are cited, the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* have been universally called

1 For a limited sample of recent contributions, see M. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); K. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); C. Markschies, *Gnosis: An Introduction*, J. Bowden, trans., (London: T&T Clark, Ltd., 2003); B.A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); A.H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); D. Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

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Gnostic—in non-specialist works, in older scholarship preceding the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, and in more recent works since the modern debate about Gnosticism really began. This shows that despite the wide variety of thoughts on how the term Gnostic should be defined, somehow scholars have always determined that these texts in particular fall into this category!

Defining the term anew is not the goal of the present work, but it will be helpful to establish what it means as it is used here. A recent work by A. DeConick presents a compelling new way of considering "Gnostic spirituality" in terms of emergent structures and cognitive frames.[2] Essentially, she sets out an emergent frame structure of Gnostic spirituality comprising five complex concepts: 1) personal possession of Gnosis, 2) experiential knowledge of God through mystic practices, 3) innate spiritualness within the individual, 4) transgressive esotericism and hermeneutics, and 5) a seekership outlook and quest orientation.[3] This frame is applied in a number of religious texts, groups, or movements, as opposed to describing one particular group or set of teachings. It is not an exclusive frame; there are a wide variety of systems developed within it, and they certainly do not all agree.

The term Gnostic is thus used here in the sense of a type of spirituality, a cognitive frame developed and disseminated into the cultural web of the early centuries of the Common Era. The system and practices described in the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* reflect all the elements of this framework, while the specific details of these beliefs and practices distinguish them from other known religious groups of the period. This book aims to present a clearer picture of these texts and the group or community that wrote and used them, beyond relegating them to the fringes as passing examples within a broad hermeneutical category.

2 Who are the "Jeuians?"

The texts analyzed here represent both introductory works and in-depth ritual manuals for a distinct, practicing religious group or community that has hitherto gone without a name or term to differentiate it from other Christian Gnostic groups or texts. It does not match the description of any group known from

2 A. DeConick, "Crafting Gnosis: Gnostic Spirituality in the Ancient New Age," in *Gnosticism, Platonism, and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, K. Corrigan and T. Rasimus, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 285–305.

3 A. DeConick, "Crafting Gnosis," 297–301.

the heresiologists, or indeed any system found in the Nag Hammadi library or other known Christian Gnostic texts. As will be demonstrated throughout this book, this group embraces a distinct cosmology and soteriology, complete with a recognizable cast of divine and sub-divine characters, and a set of developing but reasonably consistent mysteries and initiatory rituals.

Such a distinct group deserves a name to distinguish its beliefs and associated texts in scholarship. What term members of the group may have used to refer to themselves is unknown. It is suggested that they faced persecution in the name of the Savior (*3PS* 277), but it is unclear whether they would have called themselves "Christians"—particularly since they do not refer to Jesus as Christ. The heresiologists were known to give some Christian Gnostic groups titles regardless of the groups' own self-designations.[4] Some of these were based on the names of their founders or teachers, such as the Valentinians or Marcosians; however, there is no indication within the texts being examined here or any external historical records of the name of any specific leaders for this group. Other group titles arose from the names of figures that were important to the sect, such as the Sethians or Barbeloites. For the group that used the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia*, this seems to be the most logical path to follow, as they feature some fairly distinct divine beings.

At first glance, it might seem that Pistis Sophia is the most logical figure to give her name to the group; she plays a prominent role in some of the texts of the Askew Codex, and at least one scribe chose to give those texts a title with her name. However, despite this she is not the most important figure in this group's teachings—in fact, as will be addressed later in this book, she is portrayed as an essentially powerless entity of the material realms. The texts in which she prominently appears seem to be late compositions, and her story is particularly designed to address a competing religious movement.

A better representative to distinguish this group from other Christian Gnostic movements is Jeu. This figure is the cosmic demiurge—he populates the heights with his emanations, and arranges all of the archons in the material realms. He plays a vital role from the earliest stages of the group's development, and he is unique to this body of texts. Thus, the term "Jeuian" has been selected as a descriptor for these texts and the group that wrote and used them.

4 See F. Wisse, "Stalking those Elusive Sethians," 563, in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*, Vol. 2, B. Layton, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 563–576.

3 What are the Jeuian Texts?

The Jeuian texts extant today are found in two Coptic codices, known as the Bruce and Askew codices. The dating of the texts is unclear; scholarship tends to suggest that the present form of the documents originated in the late 4th/early 5th centuries of the Common Era. The date and even the original language of the texts from which these versions were translated or copied is less certain yet. It seems likely that they were written in Greek, and originated in Egypt at a time when a number of Gnostic sects were flourishing; an origin sometime in the 3rd century is probable.[5]

The texts themselves are commonly referred to as the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of Jeu*, although these titles are not original.[6] Each of these texts contains multiple books or subdivisions, but how the texts relate to each other and where their contents should be divided is sometimes contested. Because each chapter of the present work deals with an individual book, it is important to establish from the outset how the broader texts should be divided.

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5 For a sample of the discussions on the manuscripts, their contents, and their origins, see E. Amélineau, *Pistis Sophia: Ouvrage gnostique de Valentin* (1895; reprint: Milan: Archè, 1975); E. Amélineau, *Notice sur le papyrus gnostique Bruce* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1891); C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften, Bd. 1: Die Pistis Sophia. Die beiden Bücher des Jeû. Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk* (Leipzig 1905); C. Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk des dritten Jahrhunderts aus dem Koptischen übersetzt* (1925; reprint: Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2010); G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1905; reprint: New York: University Books, 1960); F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity Being Studies in Religious History from 330 B.C. to 330 A.D., Vol. II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915); E. DeFaye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme: Étude Critique des Documents du Gnosticisme Chrétien aux IIe et IIIe Siècles* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1925); F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis: A study of Christian thought and speculation in the Second Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1932); J. Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypte: Introduction aux écrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958).

6 The only title found in the Bruce Codex is "The Book of the Great ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ," found at the end of the *First Book of Jeu*. The title of the two "Books of Jeu" derives from references in the *Pistis Sophia*, and Schmidt's proposal that the Bruce Codex texts are identifiable as those to which the author of *Pistis Sophia* was referring. See C. Schmidt, 'Die in dem koptisch-gnostischen Codex Brucianus enthaltenen "Beiden Bucher Jeu"', 573–754, in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 37 (1894), 555–585, and also his discussion in *Pistis Sophia*: *Ein gnostisches Originalwerk*, 62–66. The *Pistis Sophia* derives its commonly known name from the title "Second Book of the Pistis Sophia," written in a later hand at the beginning of *2PS*. However, that text is also titled "Extracts from the Books of the Savior" at its conclusion, as is *3PS* (the other texts of the *Pistis Sophia* are untitled).

3.1 *The Bruce Codex:* The Books of Jeu

The contents and organization of the Bruce Codex are complicated: its leaves were shuffled out of order from the time it was brought out of Egypt, and many of its pages have been missing from the time it was brought to the attention of modern scholarship. There has been debate as to the proper order of the leaves and even the number and order of the books it originally contained.[7] C. Schmidt's critical edition has been generally accepted for over a century; recently, however, E. Crégheur has prepared a new edition of the *Books of Jeu*.

Schmidt divided the contents into two main works—the *First* and *Second Book of Jeu*, together called the *Books of Jeu* by modern scholarship, and the *Untitled Text*. It is clear from both the contents and the handwriting that the *Untitled Text* is not directly associated with the two *Books of Jeu*; the *Untitled Text* is not related to the group under examination here.[8] Within the remit of Schmidt's two *Books of Jeu* there are six sections, all fragmentary; he organizes these sections based on their contents.[9] These six basic units of the texts, given with Schmidt's page numbers followed by Crégheur's numbering in parentheses, are:

1) 1–4 (D1–D4). A four-page introductory section that begins with the statement, "I have loved you. I have wanted to give you life; the living Jesus, who knows the truth." The section breaks off mid-sentence.

---

7 For a full discussion of the transcriptions and critical editions of the Bruce Codex that have appeared since it was brought out of Egypt, as well as the history of the manuscript, see E. Crégheur, *Édition critique, traduction et introduction des 'deux Livres de Iéou'* (*MS Bruce 96*), *avec des notes philologiques et textuelles* (PhD diss, University of Laval, 2013), 9–50.

8 The *UT* is generally associated with the Sethian texts; see B.A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 94–95; H.-M. Schenke, "The Phenomenon and Significance of Sethian Gnosticism," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism, Vol. II: Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. Bentley Layton, 588–616; J.D. Turner, "Gnosticism and Platonism: The Platonizing Sethian Texts from Nag Hammadi in their Relation to Later Platonic Literature," 425, in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. R.T. Wallis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 425–459; J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Québec: University of Laval Press, 2001), 61.

9 In his edition, Crégheur argues for the necessity of a codicological and papyrological approach to the manuscript. However, he maintains the general order of leaves within the six individual sections of text recognized by Schmidt, with the exception of a single-leaf fragment, which he suggests should be read in the reverse order to that proposed by Schmidt (E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 117–118).

2) 1a–4a (D1ª–D4ª). A second copy of the introductory statement, written in another hand, which is also incomplete.
3) 5–34 (C1–C30). A discussion of the treasuries, and how they are populated. After an introduction to the process of emanation to fill the treasuries, there is a series of diagrams that essentially conform to a regular pattern, numbering each treasury and outlining its layout and inhabitants. The sequential diagrams begin with the first treasury, and break off in a lacuna after the 28th treasury.
4) 35–38 (A1–A4). A fragment of a hymn to the First Mystery, praising him in relation to the establishment of the thirteen aeons. The fragment begins with a stanza regarding the fifth aeon.[10]
5) 39–86 (B1–B48). Instructions relating to traversing the sixty treasuries. The extant discussion begins with the fifty-fifth treasury, and systematically progresses to the sixtieth. There is furthermore another discussion of how all things came to be, concluding with a hymn to the unapproachable god that involves Jesus reciting the verses, and the disciples saying a chorus. The first book concludes with a title, "The Book of the Great ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ." The verso of the leaf begins another book, which outlines lists of mysteries necessary to attain the height of the Treasury and Kingdom of Light. It also describes a series of baptisms in great detail, and gives instructions on how to ascend through the fourteen aeons. The section breaks off after instructions on how to conduct oneself in the place of the three archons beyond the last aeon.
6) 87–88 (E1–E2; Crégheur flips their order). A single leaf: one side gives the beginning of a hymn relating to the ocean, and the other describes part of the passage of the soul through the archons of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ).

Such are the blocks that form Schmidt's two *Books of Jeu*. The present work endeavors to explore how these texts came to be—working to determine how these texts were used, and how they came together into this current form from earlier documents and ideas. It seeks to determine the cultural and religious environment and background that produced them, and to find clues as to how and why the contents came to be in this format. In this analysis, certain of Schmidt's sections are found to be independent of the two main *Books of Jeu*,

10 Schmidt acknowledged the likelihood that these leaves do not belong with the first book (*Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 389n.1; 393); see also V. MacDermot, *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text of the Bruce Codex* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978) xiv; M. Tardieu and J.-D. Dubois, *Introduction à la littérature gnostique 1: Collections retrouvées avant 1945* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 85.

fragments of separate works. For present purposes, then, this book focuses on the two *Books of Jeu*, defined by the following organization and boundaries of the texts:

1) *First Book of Jeu* (*1 Jeu*)*: Section* 3 (5–34 in Schmidt; C1–C30 in Crégheur) and the first part of Section 5 (39–53 in Schmidt; B1–B15 in Crégheur)
2) *Second Book of Jeu* (*2 Jeu*): Second part of Section 5 (54–86 in Schmidt; B16–48 in Crégheur).

Two Jeuian fragments from the Bruce Codex are also occasionally referenced; since these are not directly part of either of the *Books of Jeu*, to avoid confusion these will be referred to as:

3) *BC Frag 1*: Section 4 (35–38 in Schmidt; A1–A4 in Crégheur)
4) *BC Frag 2*: Section 6 (87–88 in Schmidt; E1–E2 in Crégheur)

The repeated introduction is recognized as being independent of the *Books of Jeu* and the Jeuian system; thus it is not included in the analysis here.[11]

Briefly, the reasons for this organization are linked to the contents of each section and how they relate to one another:

1) Sections 1 and 2 are fragments from a separate, non-Jeuian work: besides having different handwriting from the rest, they use language and themes not found anywhere else in the Jeuian texts—e.g., consistently using the term "apostles" instead of "disciples," the title "the living Jesus."
2) Section 3 uses images, themes, and an organizational style referenced or found in the first part of Section 5 (before the title dividing *1* and *2 Jeu*) and nowhere else—e.g., the outline diagrams of the individual treasuries, referring simply to the "treasuries" rather than the "Treasury/Treasuries of Light," interest in the first emanations or origins of the divine world, presenting ritual ascent or cosmology information from higher to lower regions rather than from lower to higher.

11 This organization differs somewhat from Crégheur's conclusions on the texts' order. For the codicological reasoning on his proposed structure, see *Édition critique*, 51–95. However, he notes that due to the present state of the manuscript and the way it has been preserved, clear analysis of the papyrus, its fibers, and how the rolls were initially put together is very difficult, and that any judgments on the codicology and papyrology must be provisional and limited (*Édition critique*, 59–60).

3) Section 4 is considered a Jeuian fragment independent from the *Books of Jeu*: its depiction of the aeons contradicts the discussion of them found in Section 5, and it uses the language and aeon system that is common in the later *Pistis Sophia* texts but which is not used in the rest of the *Books of Jeu*—e.g., calling the highest deity the First Mystery instead of the unapproachable god or Father, the placement of Jabraoth and the triple-powered gods, discussing the decans and ministers of the aeons.[12]

Crégheur's new critical edition provides the immense benefit of numbering the lines on each page as found in the manuscript; thus, citations will be given using his page numbering, with Schmidt's page numbers in parentheses. However, because the present work proposes that the text consists of two separate books, and that the organization of their contents was originally slightly different from Crégheur's analysis, the citations will also include the book titles listed above. For example, a reference to *1 Jeu* C1(5),9 refers to line 9 of Crégheur's page C1/Schmidt's page 5, which from the perspective of this investigation is part of the *First Book of Jeu*. However, Crégheur's doctoral dissertation edition does not include the myriad of diagrams that appear throughout these texts;[13] for references to diagrams, then, only Schmidt's page numbering is used, i.e. *1 Jeu* (8).

3.2 *The Askew Codex:* The Pistis Sophia

In contrast to the Bruce Codex, the Askew Codex is largely complete.[14] It has a few lacunae, as well as a few fragmentary texts that are unrelated to and written in a different hand than the main composition, but overall the contents are in order and belong to the same group or community of believers. There has been some scholarly debate as to how these texts should be divided: there are some clear divisions where titles appear between texts, but in other instances it is less immediately clear how the materials should be grouped. General scholarly consensus acknowledges at least four divisions in the text, commonly known as Books 1–4. Some scholars propose as many as six subdivisions. The present work acknowledges five separate books, recognizing that a lacuna in Book 4

12 Crégheur also notes that the writing of this fragment is in a slightly different style from the bulk of the text (*Édition critique*, 78).

13 He plans to include them in the eventual published version of the book (E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 181).

14 For a very brief history of the manuscript see V. MacDermot, "Introduction," xi–xii, in C. Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, V. MacDermot, trans., (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), xi–xviii.

in fact encompasses a division between two disparate texts. This division, and how all five books relate to each other, will be discussed further in their corresponding chapters. In brief, the divisions are as follows:

1) *1 Pistis Sophia* (*1PS*): Chapters 1–62
2) *2 Pistis Sophia* (*2PS*): Chapters 63–101
3) *3 Pistis Sophia* (*3PS*): Chapters 102–135
4) *4 Pistis Sophia* (a) (*4PS*a): Chapters 136–143
5) *4 Pistis Sophia* (b) (*4PS*b): Chapters 144–148

Two fragments in a later hand are excluded from the analysis as not belonging to the rest of the works: one at the end of *1PS*, and one on the last page of the manuscript. Referencing these works is sometimes difficult, as no standard, clearly numbered edition currently exists. Often it is simply cited by book and chapter number, but chapters can extend for several pages. Thus, while the book and chapter number will be given, in the present work citations will also include in brackets the page number from V. MacDermot's translation, which in turn uses C. Schmidt's critical edition. This allows for slightly narrower pinpointing of elements in the text than the chapter alone. MacDermot's edition has the advantage of the Coptic and English translation appearing on facing pages. MacDermot's English translations will also be used, with occasional modification by the present author.

4 About This Book

This book is divided into three parts:

Part 1 covers the texts with the greatest focus on the rituals and mysteries that form the central core of the group's soteriological beliefs. It argues that these texts were most likely intended for use by priests and ritual officiants, those who have already been formally initiated into the fold, or those about to undergo initiation, depending on the text. They present evidence for multiple ranks of members with access to different levels of knowledge, group purification or initiation rites, and group liturgical practices including call-and-response hymns.

Part 2 deals with texts concerned primarily with setting out a proper ethical or lifestyle code for group members, as well as outlining punishments for those who transgress this code. It suggests that the target audience for these books

was those who were still being instructed and undergoing preparation for the initiation process. Although there are also signs that the texts in this section are part of a strand with certain distinct cosmological and systematic elements not found elsewhere, overall their contents fit with the wider system, and their inclusion in the Askew Codex shows they were accepted within the group.

Part 3 works with the texts that were most likely meant to be read first: the introductory texts meant to intrigue and attract new members, setting the teachings of this group above all others and hinting at the higher mysteries awaiting the faithful follower. These texts directly challenge the teachings of competing Christian Gnostic groups, both through the claims that Jesus only presented the disciples with true knowledge several years after the resurrection, and in the revised version of the fallen Sophia myth.

Each chapter of this book examines an individual text, including discussion of how it deals with cosmology and divine figures, analysis of external religious and cultural influences, and an examination of the elements that make up each text's unique focus. The exceptions to this pattern are Chapter 3, which discusses the diagrams found in both *1* and *2 Jeu*, and Chapters 7–8, which each deal with different parts of *1* and *2PS*, the most closely bound of the *Pistis Sophia* texts.

This thematic order of presentation aligns well with the proposed chronological order for their original composition. Although the conclusions about the contents differ, the chronological order of the texts used here essentially follows past scholarly opinion, which placed composition of the *Books of Jeu* prior to the *Pistis Sophia*, and recognized Book 4 in the traditional model of the *Pistis Sophia* as being earlier than the rest of that volume.[15] The main differences here to this established opinion are recognizing Book 4 as two separate works, *4PS*a and *4PS*b, and considering *3PS* as independent from *1/2PS*.[16] Taking into account

15 C. Schmidt, *Koptische-gnostische Schriften*, xvii; G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 574, E. de Faye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 311–314; F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, 63; J. Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypt*, 84. The exception to this general consensus is F. Legge, who maintains the line order of composition but reverses the chronology (*Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, 184; 193–194). This is primarily based on his view that the texts devolve from a more orthodox Christianity into ignorant decadence.

16 Interestingly, the only previous scholar to recognize the separation of *4PS*a and *4PS*b, and to note the similarities between *4PS*b and *3PS*, is Legge, who as mentioned above is also the only one to suggest a reverse chronological ordering of the texts (*Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, 183; "Introduction," xiv–xxviii).

the separate development of *3PS* and *4PS*b from the larger works with which they have been associated in the past, their position within the chronological scheme must be determined. The signs suggesting that they serve partially as a stepping stone between the ideas of *4PS*a and *1/2PS* will be discussed in their relevant chapters. The priority of *1 Jeu* over *2 Jeu* is less clear, but also less relevant to the discussion of the group's development. *1 Jeu* displays the basis of the group's system of the divine realm and shows the fewest signs of outside religious influence so prevalent in the other texts, so discussing it first is expedient. In all cases, the notion of chronology is based on the ideas each text expresses: each of the versions extant today shows signs of having been compiled from multiple earlier sources.

This chronological ordering from oldest to youngest helps to explain the presence or absence of certain concepts from outside religious sources in each text, as well as changing language and titles surrounding the divine world and its population. It also allows the elements that are subtly hinted at in the latest, most introductory texts to be understood more clearly in the light of the detailed knowledge presented in the earlier ritual manuals. It is hoped that this organization will further serve to make the factors that contributed to the various stages of the group's development clearer, and help to show how both their system and practice unfolded in a pluralistic religious and cultural environment.

PART 1

Baptism & Ascent Guides

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CHAPTER 1

The First Book of Jeu

1 Introduction to the Text

This is likely to be the earliest composed text of the extant Jeuian tractates. As noted in the introduction, the title "The Books of Jeu" is not found in either of the two texts grouped under this nomenclature in modern scholarship. The appellation derives from two references to two "Books of Jeu" found in the *Pistis Sophia*, and C. Schmidt's identification of these texts with them.[1] G.R.S. Mead feels the Bruce Codex tractates are not identical with those referenced in the *Pistis Sophia*, but are rather based on another document reworking those texts. He furthermore believes that what Schmidt terms the First Book belongs after his Second, based on the latter giving introductory rituals and discussing the lower aeons, while the former deals with higher realms; however, in the extant manuscript this order is impossible.[2] E. de Faye holds the chronological priority of *1 Jeu* over *2 Jeu*, but bases this on the perceived superior morality seen in the twice-repeated opening or introduction of the former as placed by Schmidt.[3] As observed in Section 1.3.1, this "introduction" is not a part of this tractate. F. Legge believes the Bruce Codex texts are chronologically later than the *Pistis Sophia*,[4] but this view is not maintained by other scholars.

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1 See Introduction, n.6; C. Schmidt, "Die in dem koptisch-gnostischen Codex Brucianus enthaltenen 'Beiden Bucher Jeu'," 573–574, in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 37 (1894), 555–585; H.-M. Schenke, "Vorwort," xxxii, in C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*, Vol. 1: *Die Pistis Sophia. Die beiden Bücher des Jeû. Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk 4., um das Vorwort erweiterte Auflage herausgegeben von Hans-Martin Schenke* (1905; revised 4th edition Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), xvi–xxxiv.

2 G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1905; reprint: New York: University Books, 1960), 520; 569–570. It should be noted that in his new edition, E. Crégheur moves the first *part* of this text to the end of *2 Jeu* to fit with his codicological theory of the texts' structure (*Édition critique, traduction et introduction des 'deux Livres de Iéou'* (*MS Bruce 96*)*, avec des notes philologiques et textuelles* [PhD diss, University of Laval, 2013]). The placement is not definite either way; however, based on the language, themes, and contents of the section, it seems to fit better as part of *1 Jeu* than as a concluding section to *2 Jeu*, and has been maintained as such in the present work.

3 E. de Faye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme: Étude Critique des Documents du Gnosticisme Chrétien aux IIe et IIIe Siècles* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1925), 314.

4 F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity Being Studies in Religious History from 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 194.

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The book's beginning is lost, and it currently starts with the description of the Father's emanation of the true god, Jeu. The whole of this text focuses on the intricacies of the Treasuries of Light, which are the divine realms populated by emanations of Jeu through the command of the Father. The first part discusses the origins and population of these realms, with each of the 28 surviving descriptions of treasuries (out of 60 originally) being outlined with a map and a list of its head, twelve additional emanations of the level, and six watchers or gate guardians, three for the way in and three for the way out. After a lengthy lacuna, the text picks up near the end of a second section dealing with instructions for passage through each of the treasuries, with only the 54th through 60th treasuries remaining. These instructions do not concern themselves with the structure and contents of these realms, since that was covered in the preceding section; rather, each one is identified solely by its head, and the rest of the information given deals with the seals, ciphers, and mystery names needed for the ascender to pass safely through it. This is followed by a discussion of how and why all of these places came to be, by virtue of the Father. There is also a rather out of place interpolation regarding a single name and seal to allow access to all of the regions. The book concludes with a hymn featuring call and response between Jesus and the twelve disciples, praising the unapproachable god, Jesus' Father, for all of his acts within himself and his role in creation, as presented in the preceding text.

The book thus acts as part of a handbook of ascension, explaining how the divine world was created, presenting a map of each of its realms, and finally giving instructions for how to navigate these realms safely. This text is the only one to give the number of treasuries explicitly as sixty, a highly unusual number for divine realms or heavens in the ancient Near East. Later texts present the Treasury as a singular, or sometimes dual, entity—although sub-ranks within the Treasury exist. However, there are certain shared characteristics that confirm the text conventionally called the *First Book of Jeu* belongs to the Jeuian text group, and is an early composition. In addition to the format of the ascension instructions, which is remarkably similar to that given for the aeons in *2 Jeu*, the prominence of Jeu in establishing the treasuries immediately sets it in connection with the rest of the texts. Furthermore, the ranks of the "five trees," which appear in all of the later texts' lists of divine ranks and mysteries, make an appearance here as part of the cosmic establishment (*1 Jeu* B13(51),19).

2 Cosmology

2.1 *Treasuries of Light*

The Treasury or Treasuries of Light are the pinnacle of the Jeuian cosmological hierarchy.[5] Their description dominates *1 Jeu*, which strives to outline all 60 treasuries that make up this early iteration, and remain a powerful force in the background of all the remaining texts.[6]

1 Jeu has sometimes been criticized for being repetitive, unimaginative, and dull, but in fact it preserves one of the most detailed ascension handbooks to survive late antiquity. The first section outlines the structures of the first 28 levels of the treasuries, beginning with the highest or innermost level and working outwards. The second section jumps in at the 55th treasury, detailing the seals and defenses needed by the initiate to pass through each level. Schmidt suggests that the treasuries are divided into two classes of thirty treasuries each, to account for the differences in the style or structure in which the two types are presented. He believes this explains the reference in *2 Jeu* to two Treasuries of Light.[7] Mead disagrees, holding that there were likely originally sixty Jeu-diagrams.[8] The lengthy lacuna in the middle prevents a definitive resolution of this conflict, but Mead's conclusion on this point is the more probable: the description of the sixtieth treasury (discussed below) fits the pattern found in the first half, despite the fact that the elements described are not depicted for the sixtieth treasury; this suggests that the format of the pre-lacuna part of the text would have been continued for all sixty treasuries.

The different formats of the two sections appear to be a result of the different aims of each section: the first part endeavors to present a full list of the inhabitants of each level and a map of their layout and contents, while the second part strives to give the initiate the information he or she needs to ascend through them, focusing on names, seals, and ciphers for accessing each level. It is unfortunate that a fuller account does not exist to allow for comparison. However, there are still key observations to be made in what remains of the text.

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5 Although the terminology referring to the highest realms shifts in later texts such as *1/2PS*, the nature of the mysteries required to reach the highest regions appears to remain the same.

6 On the number 60 and Pythagorean theory, see Hippolytus' *Haer* VI.34, where a mathematical interpretation of Valentinus' pleroma reflects Pythagorean divisions of a circle into 12, 30, or 60 parts (see also E. Amélineau, "Les traités gnostiques d'Oxford," 200, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* [Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890], 176–215, 261–294).

7 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 371.

8 G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 540.

In *1 Jeu* the Treasuries of Light are the highest realms attainable by the believer. The treasuries are populated and the head of each treasury emanated by Jeu, the true god—a title used repeatedly for Jeu in this book and nowhere else—who himself is emanated and made to emanate with his three creative voices by Jesus' Father, the unapproachable god. There is some variation between the contents or structure of different diagrams in this first section, much of which can likely be attributed to scribal confusion or error. The character diagrams will receive further treatment in Ch. 3. For now it is sufficient to note that the basic structures or inhabitants expected in each level are:

1) The Father of the treasury: a being possessing a mystery name with "ιεοϒ" as its final element
2) Series of boxes surrounding the ιεοϒ-being, most likely representing his "places"
3) A symbol depicting the "root" of these places
4) A series of alphas leading into and out of the boxes, held between two lines which divide these boxes, representing the pathways to the Father and the veils drawn before him
5) Twelve emanations/heads
6) Three/six watchers
7) The "character" of the Father of the treasury

These elements, as mentioned above, present something of a map of each level—a map which is opaque on its own, but which receives further illumination in the second part of the text, in the explanation of the sixtieth treasury.

There the text says that six places surround the treasury, with the Father of that treasury in the midst of them. It explains that the symbol is "the root of his places in which he stands." The two lines holding the series of alphas "are the pathways when you will go to the presence of the Father, to his place and his interior. These alphas are also veils which are drawn before him" (*1 Jeu* B4(42),2–12). Thus, the father of each level rests in the center of a series of places or sections, behind a series of veils.[9]

The positioning of the watchers must be extrapolated, as the example of the sixtieth and outermost treasury is apparently unique: while there is only one gate within the treasury, "at its exterior, which is outside of it, it has three gates with nine watchers over them. There are three over each gate, and the name

9 See also E. Crégheur's discussion of the treasury outlines, *Édition critique*, 134–139.

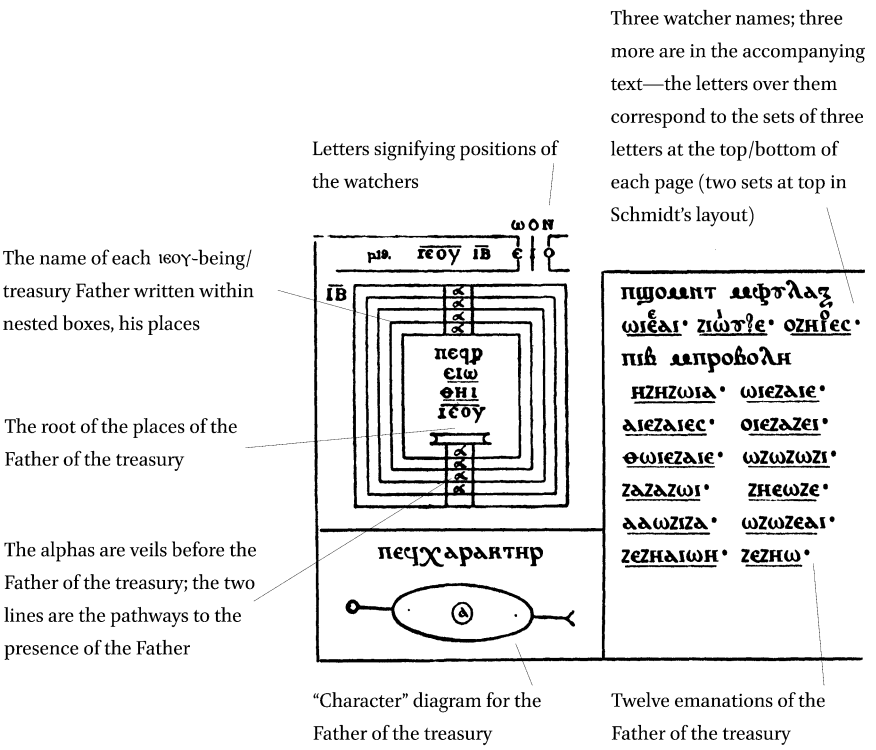
Three watcher names; three more are in the accompanying text—the letters over them correspond to the sets of three letters at the top/bottom of each page (two sets at top in Schmidt's layout)
Letters signifying positions of the watchers
The name of each ieoy-being/ treasury Father written within nested boxes, his places
The root of the places of the Father of the treasury
The alphas are veils before the Father of the treasury; the two lines are the pathways to the presence of the Father
"Character" diagram for the Father of the treasury
Twelve emanations of the Father of the treasury

FIGURE 1.1 *"Jeu" diagram outline* (*Jeu* 12)

of each of them is different" (*1 Jeu* B4(42),21–24).[10] The nine watchers over the three gates at the outermost point of the treasuries take on a life of their own in the later texts, as will be discussed shortly, but the information is still useful in explaining the Jeu diagrams. We know from this that the watchers remain at the gates of each treasury. In the examples found in the first section, there are three watcher names given within each diagram, alongside the names of the twelve emanations. There are a further three watcher names given in the text accompanying each level. All six of these names have individual letters over them.

Schmidt's layouts of the diagrams, with their placement of two sets of three letters at the top of each, are highly stylized, in part due to his lack of under-

10 This and the preceding quote give further evidence supporting the 60 treasuries of one type theory over Schmidt's theory of division: in the actual presentation of the 60th treasury as given here, there are no pathway lines, alphas, or watchers shown or given, whereas all of these elements are clearly identifiable in the diagrams of the first section.

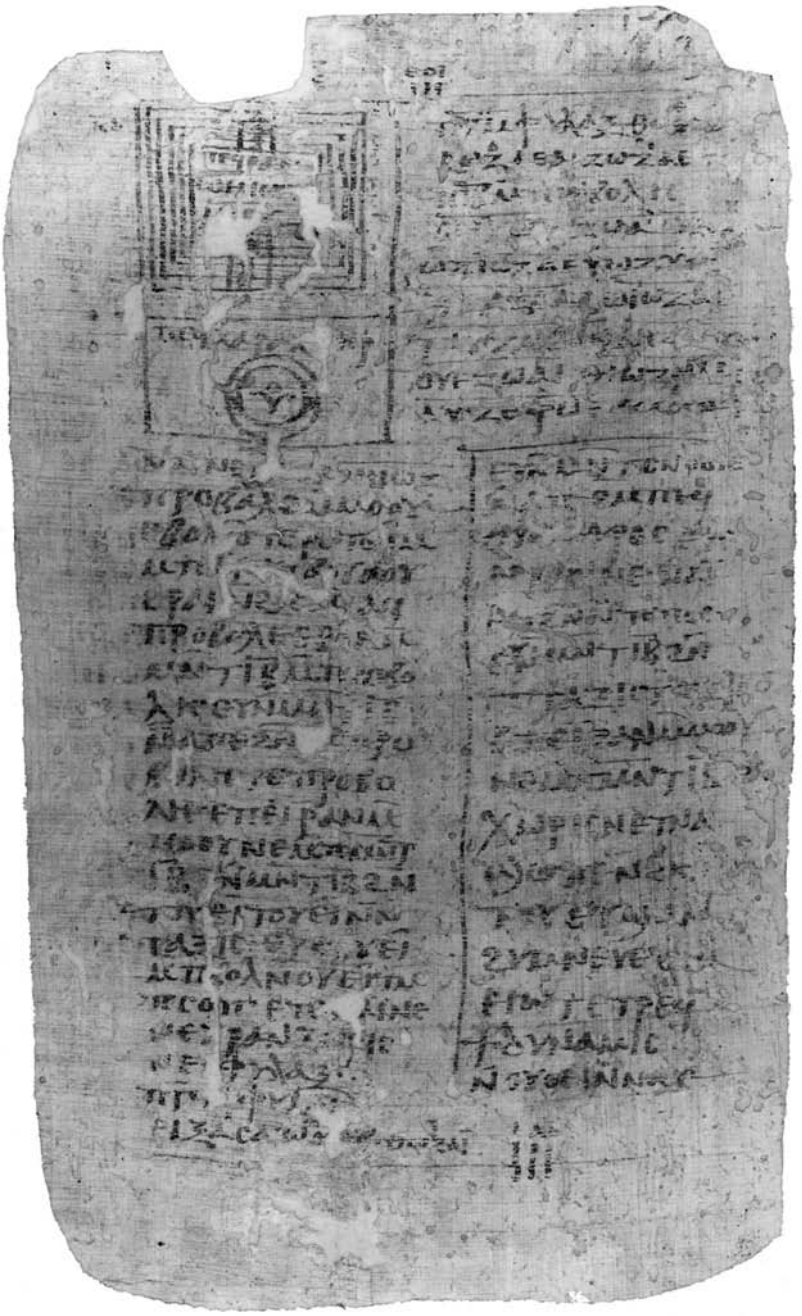

FIGURE 1.2 *Sample page from* 1 Jeu. *Jeu 24: Note lines with sets of three letters at top and bottom, not two on top* (MS Bruce 96, *f. 40v. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford*)

standing of their meaning. In actuality there is one set of three at the top of each page, and another at the bottom, after the accompanying text. Those letters at the top correspond with those over the watcher names within the diagram, and those at the bottom with the letters tied to the watchers in the additional text. In Schmidt's version, the upper set of letters consists of those from the bottom of the previous page. Some scholars have interpreted this to mean that there are three gates leading into each treasury, and three leading out, with a particular watcher over each gate.[11] Another possibility, however, is that there are two gates for each level, one going in and one leading out, with three watchers over each gate. The only place in the text that mentions three gates is the discussion of the sixtieth treasury: it explains that this treasury in particular has three gates at its exterior, with nine watchers, three over each gate (*1 Jeu* B4(42),21–24). In the other Jeuian texts, the nine watchers of the three gates are iconic as the first or outermost stage of the set of ranks or mysteries associated with the treasuries, suggesting that they are unique within the treasuries. The fact that this passage states three watchers were assigned per gate, and the extant treasury diagrams feature three watchers each at the entrance and exit areas of the treasury, makes it likely that beyond the outermost, sixtieth treasury, a single gate at both the entrance and exit with three watchers was posited. The necessity of three watchers per gate derives from the text's Egyptian antecedents, as will be discussed in Section 1.3.1.1. In either case, the diagrams present the names and positions of each of these watchers.

The treasuries themselves are divided into five "ranks" (ⲧⲁϫⲓⲥ): "There are two ranks of Fatherhood within, and one in the middle, and two outside" (ⲉⲣⲉ-ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲁϫⲓⲥ ⲙⲙⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ ϩⲓϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲉⲓ ϩⲛ-ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ϩⲓⲃⲟⲗ; *1 Jeu* B1(39),15–16). It seems that the sixty treasuries are divided into five sections. It is possible that these five sections of treasuries were viewed as being arranged in concentric circular or spherical ranks.[12] Thus, in the 55th treasury, Jesus explains that they are in the "second rank of the treasury of those without," or the "two ranks of those outside" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),14, 17–18). This uses terminology similar to that utilized in the discussion of the spaces of the Ineffable or the

11 For example, G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 541; E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 136.

12 See Figure 7.1. For a proposal for the linear concentricity of all the treasuries, see E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 134–139, 146; E. Crégheur, "La topographie céleste des *Livres de Iéou*: une illustration de la merveilleuse imagination des gnostiques," 124–129, in P. Schallum, ed., *Phénoménologie du merveillieux* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Quebec, 2012), 111–131.

First Mystery in *1/2PS*—thus, this "second rank of those without" would be the outermost circle or ranking, as there are only two ranks on the outside.[13] The 55th treasury would be located in this outermost rank, or the second rank of those without, as reckoned from the innermost. Furthermore there are "five ranks of fatherhood in the middle/Midst (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ)" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),15), suggesting the five non-luminary planets in the path of the ecliptic.[14] The most likely interpretation of the treasuries, their maps and ranks in *1 Jeu* is as a star map. As will be discussed below, this oldest of the texts has the strongest ties to star worship and the Egyptian notion of the dead finding final rest among the stars.

2.2 *The* ⲙⲛⲧⲉ

The ⲙⲛⲧⲉ appears quite innocuously in *1 Jeu*. As noted above, in explaining the organization of the Fatherhoods and treasuries, Jesus tells his disciples that "five ranks of Fatherhood are in the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, which are in the places of the god who is in the midst of all" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),18–20). The presence of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ as a distinct region here appears to have gone undetected by previous translators, presumably because 1) typically the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ is part of the phrase "the way of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ" (ⲧⲉϩⲓⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲉ),[15] and 2) in the later texts it is uniformly a realm of evil and punishment, concepts absent from its presence here among the heights of the treasuries and serving as the dwelling place of a god. These discrepancies are explained, however, by the theological shifts that occur between the composition of this text and its later cousins. Here the treasuries most likely represent the starry sky, and the five ranks of Fatherhood in the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ through the middle of them all are the five planets, moving through the ecliptic.[16] With its planetary ranks, the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ is at this time the epitome of celestial power and glory. It thus begins as the ecliptic, the path of the sun and the planets, and part of the height of existence.

2.3 **1 Jeu**—*Cosmology Summary*

This earliest of the texts presently remaining from the Jeuian group primarily discusses the sixty Treasuries of Light, the epitome of existence to which a human soul can attain. The layout and content of the description of the trea-

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13 See Section 7.2.2.

14 See discussion of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ in Section 4.2.6. The use of the term ⲙⲛⲧⲉ here as a region, despite its frequent appearance in the *Pistis Sophia*, goes without remark from previous translators. MacDermot translates it as "middle" without a capital letter, missing the connection.

15 Note however that this is not always the case; see *4PS*a 136[355], *3PS* 111[285], 132[341].

16 This will be discussed further in the discussion of astrology, Section 1.3.2.

suries reflects traditional Egyptian religious influence, and provides a detailed map of the beyond for the ascending soul to navigate the various regions. In this case the treasuries most likely represent the starry sphere, based on a notion of the soul's final resting place among the stars. The only other region that appears in this text, the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ, likely represents the ecliptic with the five "ranks" or planets moving through it. This region is described as the "places of the god who is in the midst of the All," most likely representing Jeu as a sun deity—the sun was of great importance in Egyptian religious thought as well as determining the ecliptic or "middle;" Jeu is responsible for the emanation and organization of all the contents of the treasuries, and all of the heads of these regions also bear his name.

Although they play a large role in the later texts, there is a lack of any mention of the twelve aeons/Heimarmene, or of any places of punishment. Focus was instead on providing the believer with the detailed knowledge needed to ascend through the heights. While living a good life was considered important, it was not the primary concern, and discussion of the wicked judgments only came to be considered vital later—perhaps in the light of both increasing suspicion of the astral deities and their role in human nature, and of increasing pressure from outside groups or sects, resulting in a more rigid outline of proper worship and behavior.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Egyptian Religion*

Beyond the location of purchase of the Bruce Codex in Egypt and the fact that the sole copy of all the Jeuian texts are currently preserved only in Coptic translation, other evidence supports an Egyptian provenance for the original contents of both the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia*. Despite the variety of speculations about their connections with groups known from the heresiologists, their Egyptian origin is widely accepted by scholars.[17] The nature of the

17 E. Amélineau, "Les traités gnostiques d'Oxford," 200–203, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890), 176–215; G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia: The Gnostic Tradition of Mary Magdalene, Jesus, and his Disciples* (1921; reprint: Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005), xxvii; F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity Being Studies in Religious History from 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 175–177; A. von Harnack, *Die Chronologie des altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, Vol. 2: *die Chronologie der Litteratur von Irenaeus bis Eusebius* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 184; K.R. Köstlin, "Das gnostische System des Buches

signs indicating this provenance are quite varied, ranging from the outlines and maps of the divine realm, to astronomical interest and technical tools, to ritual elements and calendrical clues, to mythological imagery. While in the later texts these elements differ from their original counterparts in role or moral nature, the varied way in which all of these appear throughout suggests that they were originally central to the group's beliefs as opposed to a secondary veneer added to a more Greco-Roman Gnostic system, as shall be demonstrated below. Here the Egyptian background of the outline of the divine realm presented in *1 Jeu* will be discussed.

3.1.1 Journey through the Gates

The extensive, formulaic pattern of presenting each level of the Treasuries, its heads or rulers, accompanying emanations, and sets of watchers, strongly parallels certain spells in the *Book of the Dead* which act as a guide for the deceased through the various gates of the underworld.[18] The number of gates through which one must traverse in the latter varies from seven to twenty-one, but one of the common features is that at each gate one must speak to three doorkeepers: a keeper, a guard and an announcer. The deceased must state the names of each to be allowed passage—much as the names of each set of three watchers are stated in *1 Jeu*, and their symbols are placed over the entry gate

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Pistis Sophia," 184–196, in *Theologisches Jahrbücher* 13, von Baur and Zeller, eds. (Bielefeld-Leipzig, 1854), 137–196; C. Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk des dritten Jahrhunderts aus dem Koptischen übersetzt* (1925; reprint: Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2010), 43; C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1892), 596; H.-M. Schenke, "Vorwort," xxiii, in C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*, Vol. 1: *Die Pistis Sophia. Die beiden Bücher des Jeû. Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk 4., um das Vorwort erweiterte Auflage herausgegeben von Hans-Martin Schenke* (1905; revised 4th edition Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), xvi–xxxiv; G. Massey, *Ancient Egypt: The Light of the World* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 771–786 B.A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 255; D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 261–262; E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 168; P.D. Scott-Moncrieff, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt*, 176. Note that Scott-Moncrieff also feels the authors show a poor grasp of the finer points of Egyptian religion that suggests they were not adherents of the traditional religion (178–179). The discrepancies he notes may simply result from interpretations and modifications of this group, which undoubtedly was not merely a late version of the traditional Egyptian cult, but rather a group of Egyptian origin with a unique syncretistic system.

18 On the close relationship between the *Books of Jeu* and Egyptian mortuary guides, see D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 261–262.

FIGURE 1.3 *Guardians over the Sixth Gate in the Papyrus of Ani. Detail from the Book of the Dead of Ani, Sheet 12. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved*

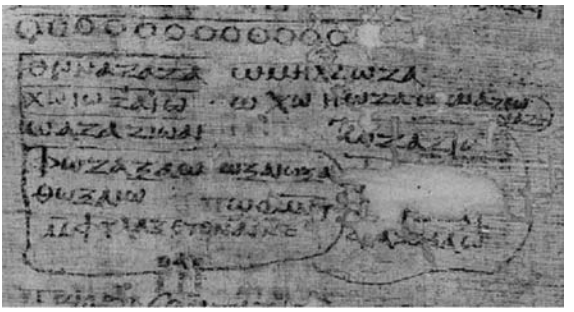
to each level. Furthermore, certain vignettes accompanying spells feature six guardian beings, which in turn could reflect the inclusion of two sets of three watchers in each of the Treasuries—one set at the entrance and one at the exit.

The differentiation between three types of gatekeepers is also apparently present in this second section: upon giving the appropriate name, seal, and cipher at each stage, "the watchers and the ranks and the veils are drawn back," allowing access to the Father of the treasury (*1 Jeu* B1(39)–B5(43), B7(45)–B9(47)). The names of the guardian beings given in the Book of the Dead texts tend to have a more descriptive nature to them; for example, "He who lives on snakes," "Fiery," and "Hippopotamus-faced, raging of power," are the names of the guardians of the fifth gate in spell 144.[19] However, it must not be ruled out that the mysterious names in *1 Jeu* possessed (or once possessed, and were corrupted in transmission) a concrete meaning to those initiated into the group.

19 J.H. Taylor, *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 136.

FIGURE 1.4 *Comparison of afterlife realm maps*

The Field of Reeds—vignette from Spell 466 of the Coffin Texts (*source: Coffin, 12th Dynasty, Deir el-Bersha. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved*)



1 Jeu—part of the second Jeu-region (*source: MS Bruce 96, f. 20v. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford*)

At any rate, the depiction of the entities one might expect to meet, and indeed maps of the realms beyond, were commonplace in many of the Coffin Texts as well as the *Book of the Dead* spells.

The goal for this journey through various gates in the Book of the Dead was to reach Osiris in the innermost region, beyond the final gate. It should be noted that while the deceased acquired an "Osiris aspect," this did not entail a direct association of the deceased and the god; rather, it associated the deceased with the god's devotees, and upon penetrating the final gate, carried the notion of belonging to that king of the underworld's court.[20] The goal of the soul's ascent in both *1* and *2 Jeu* is to reach the highest treasury, and remain in the place of the true god. This parallels the Egyptian desire to remain in the presence of the highest lord of the underworld.

3.1.2 A Stellar Afterlife

From the earliest written records in Egypt, it was believed that the king was destined to ascend to the stars after death, taking his place as one of the "imperishable" or "indestructible" stars—the circumpolar stars that never set.[21] The

20 M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 7. It might also be noted that the highest-ranking angels in *3 Enoch* have the name of YHWH appended to their names, demonstrating their closeness to the high deity.

21 J.H. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 25.

length of time allotted for the mummification process was also tied to stellar imagery: the seventy-day process was associated with the period of time that the star Sothis/Sirius disappeared before its heliacal rising to mark the beginning of the year.[22] The postmortem goal could also be viewed as a joining of the sun god Ra's retinue, traversing the sky in his "bark of millions"—again, referring to a stellar array. These various positions—joining Osiris in the underworld, joining Ra in his bark, and becoming an eternal star—were not viewed as mutually exclusive, and indeed went hand in hand.

While the idea of ascending to the sky was originally reserved for the Egyptian royalty, it was eventually expanded to include others. In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods there are numerous texts referring to a variety of individuals achieving this honored position.[23] It would not, then, be unwarranted to think the users of the *Books of Jeu* might have envisioned a similar stellar afterlife, ascending through a multitude of regions to reach the starry pinnacle of existence. Although in the Egyptian texts the series of gates, guardians, and passwords are generally restricted to spells describing passage to the underworld, it has been established that the Egyptians had a multidimensional view of the afterlife. It is possible that this group extended this idea to the ascension journey, bypassing the sojourn in the underworld. The *Books of Jeu* are highly concerned with realms of *light*, a concept at odds with the dark realm of the Egyptian underworld. The fact that the destinies of underworld journey, retinue of the sun god, and star were all connected in the early stages would allow for a later development combining elements from all of the above: the journey leads to the astral realm, where one remains in the place of the sun/deity of the regions of light.

3.2 *Astrology*

The two *Books of Jeu* are cosmologically the most enigmatic texts of the present Jeuian corpus. *1 Jeu* in particular does not correspond with any other known text on the precise structure of the divine realms. The current mutilated state of the document makes it impossible to get a clear view of the overall structure the author had in mind; however, as has been noted above, it is highly likely that there were a total of sixty "treasuries," which progressed in order from the first and innermost to the sixtieth and outermost. They were further organized such

22 M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, 36.

23 See M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, 197, 239, 289, 293, 326, etc. Compare also Dan. 12:3 for a non-Egyptian notion of the wise becoming as stars in the next life in the later centuries BCE.

that there were "two ranks of the Fatherhood within, and one in the middle, and two outside (ϩⲣⲉ-ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲁϫⲓⲥ ⲙⲙⲛⲧⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲓϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲉⲓ ϩⲛ-ⲧⲙⲛⲧⲉ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲛⲧⲉ ϩⲓⲃⲟⲗ)." In addition, there are "five ranks of Fatherhood … in the middle (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ), which are in the places of the god who is in the midst of the All" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),18–20).

The first thing that is immediately striking about this passage is the use of the term "midst" or "middle"—a technical term for the ecliptic in much ancient astronomical and astrological literature.[24] In *2 Jeu* there is also a "midst" realm located between the aeons and the treasuries, this time using the Greek term, μέσος. In the *Pistis Sophia* texts there are *two* realms of the midst, one neutral designated by the Greek term and inhabited by the Virgin of the Light, the other negative, called by the Coptic term used here, and at least in the early stages inhabited by the five great archons.[25] That there are "five ranks" within the middle rank of the *1 Jeu* treasuries is unlikely to be a coincidence. As is evident from the later texts, the five planets (excluding the sun and moon from the traditional ancient conception of seven planets) are often grouped together in the system of the users of these texts—although the opinion on the role they play changes dramatically over time. These five ranks "in the places of the god who is in the midst of the All," then, likely represent the planets, and are not counted within the total number of the sixty treasuries.

There was an idea within ancient astronomy of five parallel celestial circles: the Arctic and Antarctic circles, the summer and winter tropics, and the equator (Figure 1.5).[26] The ecliptic cut a wide path, touching the tropic circles at each solstice and the equator at the equinoxes. It is possible, then, that the two outer, two inner, and one middle rank of the treasuries represent these celestial divisions, with each circle divided into twelve, for a total of sixty celestial regions through which an ascending soul might pass. The emanations within these treasuries might then represent stars within these celestial divisions.[27] These five celestial circles might also be referred to as the five trees: the text states, "Thou hast caused it [an emanation] to produce 60 emanations which

24 See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 1.9.

25 The two Midst realms will be discussed individually in the cosmology sections of each chapter.

26 See Manilius, *Astronomica* 1.563a–602; extract from Geminus, *Introduction to the Phenomena* in J. Evans, *The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 91–94; see also G.P. Goold, "Introduction" to Manilius' *Astronomica*, xxxiii.

27 The idea of the emanations of the treasuries as stars is not unprecedented; the notion of angels as stars is also known from apocalyptic literature (C.A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* [Leiden: Brill, 1998], 28).

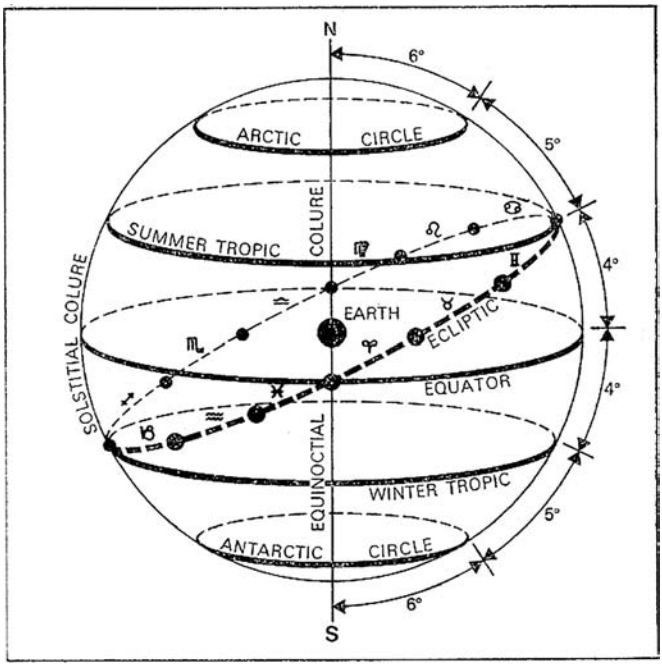


FIGURE 1.5 *The fixed circles of the sky. Reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of the Loeb Classical Library from Manilius, Astronomica, Loeb Classical Library Volume 469, with an English translation by G.P. Goold, p. xxxiii, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, © 1977 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Loeb Classical Library® is a registered trademark of the President and Fellows of Harvard College.*

are these fatherhoods … It is they which thou hast named as the ranks of the five trees" (*1 Jeu* B13(51),15–19). The five planet-ranks then move through the midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ), which as the ecliptic is independent of the parallel circle ranks, and here is the place of "the god who is in the midst of the All" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),19–20)—Jeu, who dwells in the first treasury in the innermost of the inner.[28]

28 Note that the designation of this god is ambiguous—elsewhere in *1 Jeu*, Jeu is referred to as the "true god," while the Father of Jesus is called the Father or the unapproachable god. Jeu seems the most likely candidate, as he is described as having a physical location, whereas the unapproachable god appears to be purely ineffable and without a specific dwelling—indeed, he is surrounded by and distributed through all the places (*1 Jeu* B11(49),28–B12(50),6).

As convenient a method for mapping the sky as this might have been, it should be remembered that half of the sky would have been wholly unknown, and thus the resulting descriptions of each rank cannot be imagined to represent an entirely concrete depiction of the starry abodes. The fact that the names given for both the rulers and smaller emanations in each rank are otherwise unknown from either religious or astronomical texts demonstrates that the author or group was involved in speculative designation of the heavenly beings based on a uniform grid of the celestial sphere—each portion containing an equal number of beings, regardless of observable entities.

In the context of a celestial sphere-based interpretation of the Treasuries of Light and the entities inhabiting them, the nature of the highest divine beings—the unapproachable god, Jesus, and Jeu—should be considered. The unapproachable god is described as shining within himself, and shining forth to form the emanations from Jesus to Jeu all the way down to the places of the treasuries, distributing himself throughout. He is ineffable, both filling and being surrounded by all. Jesus, on the other hand, describes himself in praise to his Father as being "thy whole likeness and thy whole image" (*1 Jeu* B11(49),20–21). He is thus a light-being, but not necessarily to be considered as a visible element such as the stars. Jeu, however, the true god, is brought forth to effect physical changes: the Father "will move him to bring forth other emanations, so that they fill these places … he will be set up in this type as head of the treasuries which are outside this" (*1 Jeu* C1(5),5–12; see also *1 Jeu* B12(50),21–B14(52),25). This seems to suggest that his role is a more concrete one in the cosmos. The fact that he is called "'Jeu,' so that those in all the places should be called 'Jeu,' so that they should be made kings over them all" (*1 Jeu* B14(52),22–24) further suggests a more essential tie with the cosmic entities, even as he is their head.[29] Could Jeu here be considered as the sun, ruler of the cosmic treasuries? This is a distinct possibility, for while he is set apart from the five ranks of planets, they are still said to be in his places—the ecliptic, the path of the sun. Given the Egyptian ties of the texts as a whole, a strong reverence for the sun over and above that for the other cosmic deities would not be out of place.[30]

29 For an alternative interpretation of these figures and the emanation process in the *Books of Jeu* as a whole, see E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 119–134.

30 His later title as one of the two "great lights" (*4Ps*a 139[360]) may also reflect this association.

3.3 *Interaction with Manichaeans*

In this earliest, most central of the Jeuian texts, connections to Manichaean myths and concepts are minimal—perhaps related to the fact that both of these movements would have been first originating and growing around the same period. However, there are a few tantalizing suggestions of early interactions between these groups.

3.3.1 The Five Trees

The five trees play an important, if vague, role in the Jeuian texts, appearing once in *1 Jeu* and later in every version of the list of mysteries or ranks one must receive or pass through to attain a place in the heights.[31]

The five trees in Manichaean literature—at least, in as much as remains today—are tied to the forces of *darkness*, beginning in the lands of darkness and bearing evil fruit (*Keph* VI 30.19–21; XV 48.14–16). This is a far cry from the high view of the five trees found in the Jeuian texts. It should be noted, however, that these five trees together constitute the "Tree of Death," the counterpart to the "Tree of Life" that contains all good things in the kingdom of light.[32] While it is possible that five light trees were also posited, the mirror reflection of those in the realm of darkness, insufficient evidence remains to say so with certainty.

3.3.2 Chariots of the Sun and Moon

It is intriguing to note that in a reference to the sun and moon found among the Manichaean fragments, it describes how the Living Spirit fitted their two chariots with "five ring walls" each. In the case of the sun, "in each ring wall he fitted twelve doors. And altogether there are 60 doors" (BT 4 no. 11 Pa).[33]

As has been established, *1 Jeu* features sixty "Treasuries of the Light," which are said to be divided such that there are "two ranks of Fatherhood within, and one in the middle, and two outside" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),15–16)—making sixty treasuries divided into five sets of twelve, each with (at least) one gate. The pos-

31 See Table 2.1.

32 S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, 10.

33 See P.O. Skjærvø, *An Introduction to Manicheism II—Texts*, 43, in his course notes, Early Iranian Civilizations 103, 2006 Fall term (available on the Harvard FAS website, http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/Manicheism/, accessed 20 September 2013). *Shabuhragan* M 98–99 (P.O. Skjærvø, *An Introduction to Manicheism II—Texts*, 29) also refers to the chariots of the sun and moon, each with five walls, and associates the chariot of the sun with twelve doors; however, this passage only suggests that one of the walls is fitted with doors, and does not specify a total of 60.

sibility of associating Jeu with the sun has already been suggested, and the idea of tying the Treasuries of Light in their ranks with this image from Manichaeism is an intriguing one. However, there is no suggestion that the Treasuries participate in gathering light, nor that there is a higher realm beyond the Treasuries to which one might ascend—none of the trappings of the sun's role in Manichaeism. As *1 Jeu* seems likely to be the earliest of the texts in the present Jeuian corpus, and thus the one most likely to originate at the earliest stages of Manichaean development, could it be possible that a degree of influence might have gone in the other direction? This format of 60 units in five sets of twelve is highly unusual in Near Eastern ancient cosmological speculations, yet in *1 Jeu* it is the centerpiece of the divine realm, highly developed and described at great length. The reference in the Manichaean fragment is associated with the sun and moon as vehicles for the collection of light, but it is difficult to imagine what purpose the 60 doors would serve for such a purpose. Perhaps the ascending pure soul and purified light in the world would have been equated. The source materials on both sides are too fragmentary to say for certain, but it is a possible avenue for further investigation.

3.4 *Interaction with Catholic Christians*

Perhaps the most obvious element that might suggest catholic Christian influence is the presence of Jesus as one of the centerpieces of the Jeuian texts. He is the only figure that appears consistently in every text. However, any notion of the importance of his physical incarnation or actions in the world is absent. In all cases, Jesus is presented years after his resurrection, and his primary role is as a teacher or instructor. He imparts to his disciples, both male and female, information about the divine world that they will require to progress to a higher state of being, as well as knowledge of the cosmic realms, their inhabitants, and their functions. His own specific place in the divine hierarchy is always tied closely to the highest entity, but there is no indication of importance afforded to his birth, death, or resurrection. Furthermore, there is no sign of influence from any New Testament text, or specifically from the four canonical gospels, at this stage. It is perhaps even likely that Jesus is not original to the Jeuian system at all, but that he was adopted into an earlier Egyptian system as his religious cultural importance increased. Essentially, Jesus exists in the Jeuian system as an emissary from the divine world, come to bring the divine mysteries to humans: a classic divine teacher of knowledge, with no recourse to anything recognizable from a more catholic source.

It should, however, be noted that by the time *1 Jeu* was compiled, both Jesus and Jeu are considered as emanations of the highest entity, the unapproachable god. Some scholars have suggested that the name Jeu might reflect a version of

the Tetragrammaton, YHWH.[34] F.C. Burkitt also proposes that the term "true god" used to describe Jeu in *1 Jeu* is itself derived from the Old Testament.[35] However, a more catholic Christian background would not separate YHWH from the highest god,[36] or suggest that Jesus came to exist before him. Considering Jeu's role as a positive cosmic demiurge, it is possible there are traces of some Platonic-Gnostic influence. However, since the core of the group's soteriology is essentially derived from Egyptian beliefs for the ascent of the soul, it might also be observed that in Roman Egypt, YHWH and Osiris were considered by some to be interchangeable.[37] Given the potential links between Jeu and Osiris in his role as lord of the dead, and those between Egyptian mortuary texts and *1 Jeu* as a whole, it is possible that the name was accepted as a syncretistic substitute for Osiris, coming along with the adoption of the name Jesus as revealer. The syncretistic nature of the group as a whole will be further demonstrated in later chapters.

4 Key Concepts

Of the extant Jeuian texts, *1* and *2 Jeu* contain the most material explicitly directed at rituals and group worship, with *4PS*a presenting some ritual information combined with more introductory or preparatory material for the soon-to-be initiated. Each of these texts tackles a different portion of the knowledge and practice that make up the core of the group's inner mysteries. *1 Jeu* imparts the information regarding the final ascent of the soul through the highest heights of the divine realm, as well as a taste of the hymnic and liturgical elements that may have constituted regular group worship.

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34 G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1905; reprint: New York: University Books, 1960), 534; F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, 86; E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 131; C. Colpe, "Heidnische, jüdische und christliche überlieferung in den Schriften aus Nag Hammadi," 68, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 25 (1982), 65–101.

35 F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, 86; refers to Ps. 30:6.

36 As noted in n.20, *3Enoch* features a high *class* of beings that have the Tetragrammaton appended to their names, a pattern shared by the heads of the treasuries in *1 Jeu*. However, there are significant differences between these texts, and any proposal of a directly shared tradition would be tenuous at best. *1 Jeu* bears more resemblance to the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* than to the Enochic or Hekhalot ascent texts. Furthermore, the Enochic texts were not considered canonical in the widespread Jewish *or* Christian traditions.

37 J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 223.

4.1 *Ritual Ascension Instructions—The Treasuries of Light*

It has been demonstrated that *1 Jeu* has an intense focus on imparting information about the structure and contents of the highest divine realms. Intertwined with this is the necessity of handing down the specific information an initiate will require to ascend through those realms, on his or her way to a final resting place in the presence of the true god. It is unclear whether this information would have also been used for a meditative ascent in life, but certainly it is intended for memorization and use in the postmortem ascent of the soul. After the first section detailing the creation and population of the treasuries, the second section gives explicit instructions on how to pass through them. The long lists of information about each level of the treasury and its inhabitants is important because it is expected that the initiated reader will eventually have to face each of these realms, and the figures that dwell in and guard them. Thus it is vital to have knowledge of who or what one will meet, and how to gain passage beyond them.

The ascent procedure involves a great deal of very specific knowledge, which is presented in a systematic way. As he guides them through each treasury, Jesus gives his disciples first a seal with which they will need to seal themselves; then, the name of the seal, which must be recited once; this is followed by a cipher or number which must be held in the hand, while another name is repeated three times. The specific names and symbols are different for each level, resulting in a great deal of information to be processed and remembered.

4.1.1 Seals

The seals are given as line drawings within the text, generally represented with straight lines, angular figures, or star or spoke patterns. The use of diagrams or seals in ancient culture, and more specifically in the two *Books of Jeu*, will be discussed in Ch. 3. Here it is sufficient to discuss the use of these seals as a part of the overall ascension process. The seal is to be used at the beginning of each stage, as the first step of overcoming the guardians of the area. The disciples are told to seal themselves with the seal, suggesting that it was to be drawn or impressed somewhere upon their bodies. It is possible that the forehead was intended to receive the seal—Jeu bears his "character" symbol upon his face (*1 Jeu* C4(8),od–oh), and character diagrams of the Jeu-beings of the rest of the treasuries may have similar placement; furthermore, in the baptismal rites of *2 Jeu*, the second seals are made upon the forehead. The face or forehead is thus established both within *1 Jeu* and related texts as an efficacious place for seals or personal identifiers. Using the seal in this context might thus visibly demonstrate the bearer's right to pass through the ranks of the particular treasury, when combined with the knowledge of its name, which is immediately recited.

4.1.2 Recitation of *Nomina Barbara*

Magical names are to be verbally spoken, once for the name of the seal upon first reaching a region, and another thrice repeated at the conclusion to be granted passage. It is interesting to note that the ascension information in this text parallels that found in the aeonic ascent account in *2 Jeu*, as will be discussed in the next chapter; however, while in *2 Jeu* the participant is given three names to recite one time each, here it is reduced to one name that is to be repeated three times. It is unclear to what the repeated name refers; it is unlikely that it stands for the name of the guardians or watchers, since the watchers are meticulously each given individual names in the first part of the book. It might be possible that originally the instructions involved a single name spoken once, but that this version of the handbook of ascension information was compiled at the same time as the aeonic ascension detailed in *2 Jeu*, and the number of names to be recited in the treasury ascent was inflated to parallel the pattern found in the lower, aeonic journey.

When these names are recited, "the watchers and the ranks and the veils are drawn back, until you go to the place of their Father" (*1 Jeu* B2(40)–B3(41)). Regardless of what exactly they are naming, these names thus serve as credentials to the bearer, demonstrating higher knowledge that allows them access to the higher, inner realms.

4.1.3 Ciphers

Each treasury requires its own, unique cipher. The term translated here as "cipher" is "ψῆφος", which can mean a number of things: most commonly, a pebble or stone used in a number of different ways, from a voting tool to a divinatory one. It can also refer metaphorically to a number or cipher—and as the ψῆφος are described in the text only with numbers, in her English translation MacDermot described it accordingly. The text specifies that the cipher is held in the hand of the participant, suggesting that it was written or engraved on a physical object, such as a small stone of some variety. The necessity of holding these symbols in one or more hands—as opposed to being worn around the neck or otherwise displayed—gives these descriptions a further materiality and instructional specificity that supports an actual, physical ritual context as opposed to a purely literary phenomenon.

This idea of holding a sign or amulet associated with a particular superterrestrial region in the hands is also found in certain Jewish adjuration formulae. For example, a Coptic adjuration for help calls upon Gabriel, insisting that he come "on account of the seal of Adonai, the father, and the fourteen amulets that are in my right hand."[38] Lesses observes that as the text also refers to

38 M.W. Meyer and R. Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*: *Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Fran-

fourteen firmaments, a correspondence between the amulets and the firmaments is likely.[39] Although this is a calling down of powers to earth rather than an ascension, as in the *Books of Jeu* each region has its own individual sign that must be known and possessed in order to deal with it. In *1 Jeu* all of the elements—the names, seals, and ciphers—combine to display the knowledge of the ascender, which in turn conveys his or her worthiness to ascend. When the signs are shown and the proper words recited, all of the guardians move away, allowing passage through the aeon.

4.2 *Liturgical Evidence—Hymnic Call and Response*

Besides the remarkably detailed outline of the divine realm and instructions on how to proceed through it, *1 Jeu* also contains a unique hymn that provides further evidence these materials were meant for use in a group or community setting: it features a "call and response" format between the leader and fellow worshippers (*1 Jeu* B10(48),15–B15(53),25). The twelve surround Jesus, and he sings glory to the unapproachable god, with the disciples giving a refrain of three amens and "O unapproachable god" after each verse. The hymn takes the form of extended praise for the gradual unfolding and production of the world, basically covering all of the details that the preceding text has outlined. It is thus the reiteration of the group's theology and cosmology in hymnic form. The fact that it requires both a main speaker and the response of additional participants makes it likely that it was meant for performance in a group setting, reinforcing their belief system in an act of praise.

5 Summary

The Jeuian group originated in an Egyptian context, in approximately the 3rd century CE. One of their primary concerns was the journey and destiny of the soul after death. Thus, both a detailed outline of their complex cosmology and acquisition of the necessary knowledge for the soul to travel to its ultimate destination were of the utmost importance. The goal was for the soul to find its way to the presence of the true god, Jeu, just before the realm of the ultimate source of all things, the unapproachable god. From the earliest evidence remaining from this group, they incorporated both Jesus as a divine figure and

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cisco: Harper, 1994), 136–137; cited in R.M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 320.

39 R.M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices*, 320.

teacher, and Jeu as the universal demiurge and ruler of the divine realm as far as the human soul could travel. However, these vaguely Christian concepts were inserted into a basically Egyptian system of beliefs, rituals and practices. Indeed, Jeu demonstrates some solar traits, as well as traits of Osiris as the lord of the dead or underworld, with the blessed dead gathering in his presence. Other more "catholic" Christian notions, such as use of the gospels or the importance of Jesus' life and death, are completely lacking, suggesting that although the surface names and figures are adopted, the group founders had little knowledge of or interest in more mainstream Christian beliefs or practices.

The *First Book of Jeu*, as the earliest of the extant Jeuian texts, concerns itself with the innermost, most vital and distinguishing teachings of the group. The extensive description of the emanation of the beings populating the Treasuries of Light, and their positions within those treasuries, goes hand-in-hand with detailed instructions on how to pass through these realms on the soul's journey to a place of rest in the presence of the true god. The text thus represents a handbook for those who had already received the initiations or baptisms, giving instructions for the ascension of the soul. In this way it is clearly parallel to Egyptian mortuary literature, particularly the *Book of the Dead*, and is a reflection of the Egyptian milieu in which this group initially developed. The later, more introductory Jeuian texts move away from such strong Egyptian imagery, as over time the religious and cultural environment around the group changed and they attempted to adapt. However, this early document demonstrates the core type of mystery teaching upon which the group was founded, which continues to be hinted at in the later-composed introductory texts.

CHAPTER 2

The Second Book of Jeu

1 Introduction to the Text

This text shifts the focus from the heights of the Treasury to the intermediate levels that must be traversed first: the twelve (or fourteen) aeons. Additionally, here are found four of the most detailed ritual descriptions from any early Gnostic text, complete with depictions of the seals to be drawn on the recipients' foreheads and long lists of ingredients for each incense offering. The text is clearly a compilation from several sources, as no less than four different permutations of a list of ranks or mysteries of the Treasury of Light are found at various points throughout. The group of disciples has been expanded to include the women disciples as well as the twelve, and the women remain important throughout the remainder of the texts. The format of the instructions for aeonic ascent is essentially similar to that found in the treasury ascent found in *1 Jeu*.

The text evidently serves as a basic guide to the initiation rituals—the baptisms of water, fire, Holy Spirit, and a mystery to remove the evil of the archons—as well as providing a guide to the material, aeonic realms to be traversed prior to reaching the ranks of the Treasury. Once the baptismal rites are performed and their associated seals are received, attention turns to the information needed for aeonic ascension. The conception of the aeons is early, and sees much development in the later texts. Here there is an unusual subdivision of the twelve aeons, with the sixth being termed the "little Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ);" furthermore, a fourteenth aeon is apparently an extension of the thirteenth, a division not found elsewhere. The inclusion of multiple versions of the lists of ranks or mysteries suggests that a great deal of speculation was occurring regarding the hierarchy of mysteries, here collected and presented in close succession. Whereas the beginning of *1 Jeu* is missing, here it is the ending that is lacking, and what lies beyond the triple-powered gods who are outside the Treasury of Light remains uncertain. The mystery that Jesus emphasizes over all others many times, the mystery of the forgiveness of sins, remains a mystery.

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2 Cosmology

2.1 *Treasury of Light*

2 Jeu begins with a discussion of the Treasury of Light, but unlike *1 Jeu* with its multitude of treasuries, here it is referred to as the singular "Treasury of Light," as a specifically named region, rather than as the series of individual treasuries.[1] As noted above, there are no fewer than four lists of ranks or mysteries associated with the Treasury of Light in *2 Jeu*, no two of which are identical (see Table 2.1). Clearly a great deal of speculation was occurring about these regions, their contents, and what was to be expected in them, and this author has apparently compiled a number of different versions of these speculations. However, despite the variations, the basic components of the list are generally the same. Both in *2 Jeu* and in versions of the list found in *1/2PS*, the watchers, child of the child (or twin saviors), 3 amens, 5 trees, and 7 voices appear in some order in almost every account. Although the bulk of *2 Jeu* is devoted to outlining the baptismal rituals and the information needed to traverse the lower aeonic regions, the number of lists and passing references to the Treasury demonstrates that the attainment of this pinnacle of existence was meant to be high in the minds of those in the initial stages of preparation for the journey. In addition, the fact that the main elements remain the same in the earliest and latest texts further demonstrates the unity of system between these early and later writings. Despite differences in surface themes and language, the core mysteries remain essentially the same.

Some discussion of a few key players in the Jeuian divine hierarchy found in the Treasury is necessary. The all-important role of Jeu in the formation of the divine realms was demonstrated in *1 Jeu*. In *2 Jeu* most of the text is devoted to detailing the beings of the lower aeonic world and outlining the preliminary or initiatory rituals; accordingly the role of as transcendent a being as Jeu is less prevalent. However, he still appears in a number of the lists of mysteries or ranks that Jesus presents to his disciples. In the first list, immediately preceding the performance of the three baptisms, Jeu is named as "ruler of the whole treasury" and as the final bastion before their entry to "the treasury of the innermost ones, to the places of the innermost of the innermost, which is the silence and quietness," where they receive rest (*2 Jeu* B21(59),12–21; see

1 However, it is occasionally referred to in the plural; see *2 Jeu* B30(68),26, 33; B37(75),18; B38(76),23, B47(85),3, 24. *2 Jeu* B35(73),27 also specifically mentions a "second Treasury of Light."

Table 2.1). After the baptisms and the mystery to take away the evil of the archons, again a list of ranks and progression is given. This time Jeu again features near the end of the list, described as "the great Man, he who is the ruler of this whole Treasury of the Light,"[2] and "the father of the Treasury of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B35(73),6–15, see Appendix 2). Here, however, there are still places to progress beyond his first appearance; he seems to be stationed at the outermost regions of the Treasuries. After passing through further regions into the interior of the Treasuries, they reach the treasury of the "true god." In *1 Jeu* this is also a designation of Jeu, but here it appears to refer to a separate figure. Once the treasury of this "true god" is attained, the true god presents them with his mystery, seal and great name, and calls upon the "unapproachable god" (ⲡⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲁⲧⲛⲣⲁⲧϥ). This is a term which appears in the hymn at the end of *1 Jeu*, also referring to the Father of Jesus (*1 Jeu* B10(48)–B15(53)). This unapproachable god sends forth a light power to complete the disciples in "every pleroma, and make [them] into a rank in that treasury [of the true god]" (*2 Jeu* B37(75),29–32). Thus the place of the true god is the highest to which a human can attain, residing in the presence of the being immediately below the highest being or divine power in existence—who is by his nature "unapproachable."

The division of Jeu, the true god into two separate entities in *2 Jeu* may stem from confusion on the part of the author or compiler of the text. In *1 Jeu*, the true god Jeu produces, rules, and gives his name to all the ruling entities of the treasuries. The beginning of the text is explicit, stating, "This is the true god. He [Jesus' Father?] will set him up in this type as head. He will be called Jeu" (*1 Jeu* C1(5),2–4), and shortly thereafter a diagram of the true god's type is labeled, "Jeu, the true god" (*1 Jeu* C1(5),oe–of). However, elsewhere the name "Jeu" is often omitted, and he is simply referred to as the true god. This is especially apparent in the second half of the book, after the major lacuna in the recounting of the treasury layouts.[3] It seems likely that the titles "Jeu" and "the true god" were early on interchangeable references to the ruler of the treasuries,

2 This title suggests the theme of a primal divine "Man" that is later restated but slightly altered in *3PS*; see Section 6.2.2.

3 In the final hymn of *1 Jeu* there are particularly ambiguous references to the true god and Jeu in separate stanzas (*1 Jeu* B12(50),21–B15(53),8). It is possible that the first half of *1 Jeu* (Crégheur's section C) is actually part of a separate text or contains part of a tradition independent from either *1* or *2 Jeu*, to account for the slight differences in nomenclature and discussion of divine emanation; however, these differences are minor enough that such a possibility remains purely speculative.

but that their use in different contexts may have confused a later author or compiler into believing them to be separate figures. The "true god" could easily be taken as a title appropriate to a higher entity, while Jeu, being a knowable name, might be considered more appropriate to a powerful but less lofty figure. Jeu maintains his positive nature and residence in the Treasury of Light, as the tradition explicitly ties him with its creation and organization, but the true god is exalted to the place immediately before the unknowable one. The author of *2 Jeu* displays similar confusion in his addition of a fourteenth aeon to the standard thirteen-aeon layout, as will be discussed below.

It should also be observed that another important figure within the Jeuian mythological system, the Great Sabaoth the Good, appears in one of these lists of ranks (*2 Jeu* B32(70),17; see Table 2.1). His rank appears within the gates of the Treasury of Light, between the ranks of the twin saviors and the great Jao, the Good. No information is given about his power or role. Although this figure is important in Jeuian myth, due to the nature of this text as a ritual manual, here he is referenced only in passing. It is clear that his name would have been recognized by the intended readers of the text, who would have already received all of the teaching required to undergo the rituals this book exists to explain. Thus, further explanation here was deemed unnecessary.

TABLE 2.1 *Ranks of the Treasury of Light*

2 Jeu **B16(54)**	***2 Jeu*** **B19(57),27–B20(58),4**	***2 Jeu*** **B20(58),27–B21(59),21**	***2 Jeu*** **B32(70),4–B37(75),32**	***1PS* 1[2–3]**	***1PS* 10[18]**	***2PS* 86[194]**	***2PS* 86[197]**	***2PS* 93[217]**
Watchers	9 Watchers of 3 Gates of ToL	Watchers of Gates of ToL	9 Watchers of ToL	Watchers of (doors) of ToL	9 Watchers of 3 Gates of ToL	Saviors	9 Watchers	Emanations of Light
3 Amens	Child of the Child	Ranks of the Treasury	3 Amens	Twin Savior = Child of Child	Twin Savior = Child of Child	9 Watchers of ToL	Twin Saviors	12 Saviors
The Twins	3 Amens	5 Trees	Child of the Child	3 Amens	3 Amens	Twin Saviors	3 Amens (+ 12 Saviors?)	9 Watchers & 3 Gates of ToL
The Triple-Powered One	5 Trees of ToL	7 Voices	Great Sabaoth (of ToL)	5 Trees	5 Trees	3 Amens	5 Trees	Twin Saviors
Ranks of the 5 Trees	7 voices & Will of the 49 Powers	Fatherless Ones	Great Jao the Good (of ToL)	7 Amens = 7 Voices	7 Voices	5 Trees	7 Voices	3 Amens
7 Voices	Name of all Names/Great Light surrounding ToL	Triple Spirits	7 Amens	5 Helpers	7 Amens			5 Trees
Incomprehensible Ones of ToL		Place of Jeu (Treasury of the Outermost Ones)	5 Trees/ Unmoved Trees	(Extension of Great Light)	Saviors of ToL			7 Amens

2 Jeu B16(54)	*2 Jeu* B19(57),27–B20(58),4	*2 Jeu* B20(58),27–B21(59),21	*2 Jeu* B32(70),4–B37(75),32	*1PS* 1[2–3]	*1PS* 10[18]	*2PS* 86[194]	*2PS* 86[197]	*2PS* 93[217]
		Treasury of the Innermost Ones (Silence and Quietness)	7 Voices	5 Incisions	Ranks of emanations of ToL			
			(continued—see Appendix 2)	First Ordinance	5 Leaders = 5 Helpers			
					Great Envoy of Ineffable			
					5 Incisions			
					First Ordinance = Mystery of the Informer			

2.2 *The Place of the Right*

Scholars have traditionally located the place of the right immediately below the Treasury of Light (see Appendix 1). However, its origin appears to have actually been as a term for the Treasury itself. Through the course of its development it becomes detached and devalued, its purpose obscured in the introduction of new levels and language regarding the higher realms.

Its first appearance in *2 Jeu* is in a list of places for which Jesus promises to give the disciples their mysteries. The order here is:

1) The twelve divine aeons,
2) The (place of the) invisible god,
3) The Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), and
4) The place of the right. (*2 Jeu* B18(56),18–26)

The mysteries of the twelve aeons are duly given later in the text. After this, the thirteenth aeon is described as housing the great invisible god. There is following this a "fourteenth aeon," which is otherwise unknown in other texts, but that appears to be a clumsy addition of the author that should actually be part of the thirteenth aeon. Beyond this is an unnamed space which, based on the nature of its inhabitants, it is fairly clear that it is the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), as will be demonstrated in Section 2.2.3 below. The important detail to be taken from this latter space in relation to the place of the right, however, is that the three entities in that region are described as being "outside the Treasuries of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B47(85),3).[4] Although the text cuts off before progressing beyond this place, it certainly appears that these good beings, who are held back only by their lack of the mystery of the forgiveness of sins, are stationed immediately before the Treasury; they are waiting for when "[Jesus] will give the mystery of the forgiveness of sins to these three archons of the light, which are of the last of all the aeons, because they have believed in the mystery of the Kingdom of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B48(86),1–4). The mystery of the forgiveness of sins is the ultimate requirement for entry into the Treasury: although descriptions of the circumstances for its administration are varied (*2 Jeu* B20(58),10–22; B30(68),23–B31(69),27; B36(74),14–B38(76),9; B48(86),9–21), it inevitably gives access past the watchers to the Treasury and indeed to the presence of the true god, located in its heart. These beings in the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) are "superior to all the gods which are in all the aeons" (*2 Jeu* B47(85),24–25)—they are

4 Usually in *2 Jeu* the Treasury of Light is singular, and MacDermot also translates it so; however, the text reads plural in this instance. See n.1.

beyond the lower aeons that form the "place of the left" in later texts—and wait here immediately outside the Treasury until they receive the ultimate mystery through Jesus' grace. Establishing that the place of the right is in fact the Treasury at this early stage helps to explain some of the statements in the later texts.[5]

2.3 *The Place of the Midst* (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ)

The last realm of the so-called Higher or Middle Light-World of earlier scholars' cosmological outlines,[6] the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ begins as the midpoint of the universe between the realms of the left and right, before later being caught in the shuffle of increasingly stratified levels. The Greek μέσος is used for this realm, and should not be confused with the lower realm inhabited by evil archons in the later texts, the Coptic ⲙⲏⲧⲉ, both of which are unhelpfully translated as the "Midst" or "Middle."[7] Since these are two very distinct realms, the appropriate term from the text will be used to distinguish the two.

As with the place of the right, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ receives only one reference in the *Books of Jeu*, in the same list as the former (*2 Jeu* B18(56),18–26). Its position in the list is between the thirteenth aeon (or as described in the text, the place of the invisible god and his receivers) and the Treasury of Light (or the place of the right). Based on the outline of the aeons that follows in the text, this would appear to be connected with the "fourteenth aeon" immediately following the thirteenth aeon. However, there are actually *two* areas described after the thirteenth aeon and before the Treasury: the fourteenth aeon, inhabited by the "second great invisible god" (*2 Jeu* B46(84),28), and a space beyond it that holds the "three archons of the light" or the "three gods which are outside the Treasury of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B47(85),1–3). There are two seals given, one for each of these spaces: the first one causes the powers of the second invisible god to withdraw and allows passage to the next place with the triple-powered ones, where the next seal is used.

This possibly reflects a mode of addressing the realms found in *BC Frag 1* (A3(37),17–A4(38),16): there the 24 invisible emanations are listed as a part of the thirteenth aeon, but also receive their own stanza apart from the praises

5 For more on the motif of right and left in other Gnostic treatises, see E. Crégheur, *Édition critique, traduction et introduction des 'deux Livres de Iéou'* (*MS Bruce 96*), *avec des notes philologiques et textuelles* (PhD diss., University of Laval, 2013), 414–415.

6 See Appendix 1.

7 The evil ⲙⲏⲧⲉ region is generally referred to as the "way of the Midst," but this still does not give the reader a clear idea of the distinction between the two levels.

about the thirteenth aeon itself. *2 Jeu* may thus reflect a confused interpretation of the need to address the 24 invisible emanations of the thirteenth aeon *and* the invisible god, one of the higher entities of the aeon.[8] This would explain the fourteenth aeon's nondescript "second invisible god," which appears nowhere else in any of the texts. The address in the thirteenth aeon only covers the 24 emanations; the invisible god still needs to be dealt with, but the author assumed that there is only one seal per aeon, and thus added a "fourteenth aeon" to cover the remaining part of the known ascent ritual or prayer. The fact that in the list of realms given at *2 Jeu* B18(56),18–26 the order goes directly from the thirteenth aeon to the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ suggests that the fourteenth aeon is a clumsy addition, and not a part of the main system. The unnamed place housing the three light-archons or triple-powered gods is the "ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ," the natural step beyond the thirteen aeons.

Jesus says that he "will give the mystery of the forgiveness of sins to these three archons of the light which are of the last of all the aeons, because they have believed in the mystery of the Kingdom of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B48(86),1–4). These are the only archontic beings to whom this promise is made in this text—although there are other repentant archons in the sixth aeon, called those of the "little ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ", which have a little goodness in them (*2 Jeu* B41(79),17–22), there is no immediate indication that they will be given the higher mysteries in the end. From these uses of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, it is apparent that the term is being used to refer to a location for repentant beings who have not been fully inducted or purified with the highest mysteries—in particular the mystery of the forgiveness of sins, that highest of mysteries which is required for access into the Treasury. The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ itself is located between the thirteen/fourteen aeons (or the place of the left) and the Treasury of Light (or the place of the right)—a true intermediate point between these two extremes of existence, the middle ground between the unrepentant and the blessed mystery recipients.

2.4 *Thirteenth Aeon*

The thirteenth aeon also first appears in the same list in which the places of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and the right emerge (*2 Jeu* B18(56),18–26). Although it is not explicitly called the "thirteenth aeon" in that list, it is identifiable by its position between the twelve aeons and the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, as well as its inhabitant—the invisible god, which is always associated with the thirteenth aeon. In its description in the list of aeons and their defenses, greater detail is presented about its residents: in addition to the great invisible god, the great virgin spirit and the

8 On the entities of the thirteenth aeon, see below.

24 emanations of the invisible god also dwell within. These 24 emanations play a greater role in later texts, when Pistis Sophia becomes included in their number, but here they are simply named with mystery names. They "will come before you [the disciples], wishing to take hold of you, as they envy you because of these mysteries which you have received" (*2 Jeu* B46(84),3–5). These beings, like the believing triple-powered gods in the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and the believing archons in the sixth aeon, are jealous of the disciples and the mysteries they have received; however, unlike these other envious beings, they are neither promised eventual salvation nor rejoice for the disciples when the proper mysteries are presented. The thirteenth aeon is thus introduced as a negative stop along the believer's path of ascension, home to jealous beings who desire to hold back the enlightened disciples.[9]

2.5 *The Twelve Aeons*

Although overall the twelve aeons are depicted as regions to be avoided or passed through, in *2 Jeu* their nature is somewhat ambiguous: some of them are depicted as home to evil entities that flee in the face of truth, while others rejoice for the disciples and their display of divine knowledge. In any case, there are still strong ties to the astral ascension theme found in *1 Jeu*, with the presentation of names, seals and ciphers to progress through the guarded realms—here sometimes tied with more hostile entities, but the parallels are clear nonetheless.

The system in *2 Jeu* has the twelve aeons divided. The first five are described in language that suggests a wicked nature: upon being presented with the appropriate name, seal and cipher, the archons within flee to the west and the left, directions associated with evil (*2 Jeu* B39(77)–B41(79)). Also, in the third and fourth aeons Jaldabaoth and Samaelo, two names associated with evil particularly in the Sethian system, have been included among the names of the archons.[10] These first five aeons, then, apparently represent a lower stratum

9 The thirteenth aeon is also present in *BC Frag 1* A3(37),17–A4(38),16. Here the 24 invisible emanations are listed separately from the invisible god, but both are said to be set up in the thirteenth aeon. In addition, the "three gods" (presumably the three triple-powered gods, which outside of *2 Jeu* always appear in association with the thirteenth aeon) also appear within its bounds. In this case all of the aeons, including the thirteenth, contain "members" of Jesus which have been scattered and which must be gathered and restored to the light-realms. These factors reflect the system found in *1/2PS*, as does the language of the fragment as a whole.

10 See discussion in Section 2.3.3.3.

with a negative nature. The sixth aeon, on the other hand, is called "the little ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ," and its archons have a little goodness in them because they believed (*2 Jeu* B41(79), 17–22). When they are presented with the appropriate information, they rejoice for the disciples and let them pass. The archons in the remaining aeons are described with neutral language; they do not flee to the west, but simply withdraw and allow the disciples to proceed.[11]

The rulership of the twelve aeons in this text is not clear. Schmidt, believing that the aeons, their nature and inhabitants remain largely the same throughout these and the *Pistis Sophia* texts, argues that Sabaoth the Adamas must rule the aeons.[12] He takes the reference to the myriad of gods in the twelfth aeon "who in the Treasury of the Light are called archons; they are the great archons who rule over all the aeons" (*2 Jeu* B44(82),24–28) as a reference to Sabaoth and his evil minions. Furthermore, he acknowledges that the author of this text has no knowledge of the places of punishment found in the later texts—the way of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ), the Chaos, Amente, or the outer darkness—but suggests that instead, the whole of the twelve aeons themselves are viewed as the places of punishment.[13] It is true that this text shows no knowledge of the above-mentioned punishment realms; and given that Sabaoth the Adamas is connected with the "great archon" earlier in the text (*2 Jeu* B17(55),22–25), and that his is the epitome of the evil one must have removed to ascend to the heights (*2 Jeu* B29(67),24–26), one might be tempted to agree.

On the other hand, there is significant evidence to suggest that such a leadership role for Sabaoth the Adamas within the twelve aeons was not primary in this text. The two references to him in *2 Jeu* highlight his position as the epitome of archontic evil, the "great archon," whose taint afflicts all men who do not undergo the proper rituals, and whose powers further entice some misguided people from the path of light to engage in disturbing sexual rituals (*2 Jeu* B17(55),14–20, B29(67),24–26). However, nowhere in this text does it specify where he exists or operates. While he is inevitably styled as purely evil, the twelfth aeon that is his abode in the later *PS* texts is here described with neutral language—and overall, only the first five aeons are depicted in negative

11 E. Crégheur divides the aeons into three sections: 1–5 as the lower/inferior aeons, 6–11 as the aeons of the little Midst, and 12–14 as the upper/superior aeons (*Édition critique*, 140–146).

12 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1892), 395.

13 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 394–395.

terms. Furthermore, the twelve aeons are explicitly said to belong to the invisible god (*2 Jeu* B30(68),31), not Sabaoth the Adamas, and in the description of the twelfth aeon, the beings that are found are the invisible god, the Barbelo, the unbegotten god, and the "great archons" who are said to serve them. This is the only place where the unbegotten one appears as a unique figure in the texts, but the first two of this triad appear frequently and do not have an overtly negative nature.[14] The neutral character of both the twelfth aeon and its heads here would seem to discount the possibility of Sabaoth as the leader of twelve evil aeons at this stage. Although the inclusion of the Sethian triad here is likely a secondary addition to an original outline, the fact that Sabaoth the Adamas is not mentioned in connection with the twelve aeons in any way here seems to be deliberate. Only when the triad is transferred to their permanent home in the thirteenth aeon in later texts does Sabaoth take his place as head of the twelve evil aeons.

Schmidt also notes the myth in *4PS*a of the two brothers Sabaoth the sinner and Jabraoth the repentant, who each ruled the archons of six of the aeons, but acknowledges that the myth as it appears in that text cannot account for the division between the upper and lower aeons here.[15] Although Jabraoth's name does appear in the Bruce Codex (*BC Frag 1* A4(38),19), it is in a fragment, which shares terminology, soteriology, and cosmology most closely with *1/2PS* and is not a part of either of the *Books of Jeu*. Schmidt accepts that this fragment is not a part of the *Books of Jeu*, and that it is in fact later than those texts; however his other conclusions on this *2 Jeu* passage are not convincing. He reconciles the difference in the numbers of good and evil aeons and the positioning of the good "little Midst" with an awkward proposal of the inability to have a true middle aeon out of twelve, thus placing six on one side of it and five on the other.[16]

It is true that the split nature of the twelve aeons in *2 Jeu* is unique. Although the myth of two brothers each ruling the archons of six of the aeons, one sinning and one repentant, is found in the *PS* texts and is likely to be an early part of the Jeuian system, a couple of points stand out: first, the number of good versus evil aeons is wrong (instead of six and six, here it is five and seven); and second, in

14 *4PS*a does present the invisible god as the provider of power for one of the malefic planets, but overall in the texts he does very little and is simply ignorant—in opposition to actively evil figures such as Sabaoth the Adamas or Authades.

15 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 392.

16 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 392–393.

those texts where the myth does appear, the repentant archons are lifted forth from the aeonic realm and the sinning archons are either imprisoned within or rule alone over the whole of the twelve aeons. There is no evidence in any of the other texts of a sustained split in the nature of the aeons as one must pass through them. The uniqueness of the five/seven aeon split in *2 Jeu* speaks of the group's developing beliefs: in this early phase, the division of the aeons into five evil and seven neutral realms suggests the concept of five sublunar chaotic or abyss realms and seven planetary heavens shown in certain other Gnostic texts, these in turn being associated with the twelve sections of the zodiac.[17] As these realms were the very beginning of the soul's ascension from the starting point of earth, it would be logical to begin moving through the sublunar realms and work one's way up through the planets to the starry realm.[18]

2.6 2 Jeu—*Cosmology Summary*

While the Treasury of Light is still the ultimate destination of the true disciple, it is now often described as a single region (or perhaps a duality). There is great interest in the various ranks of the Treasury, although the order and number of these ranks vary, and different lists of them pepper the text. It is likely that the author has compiled these variations from a number of sources, and has endeavored to include them all despite some inconsistency between them. As a guidebook to the initiatory rites and lower mysteries, however, this text's more immediate concern is passage through the aeons to reach the Treasury: the regions one must traverse are listed as the twelve divine aeons, the place of the invisible god (the thirteenth aeon), the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, and finally the place of the right (the Treasury of Light). Again there is a distinct lack of regions explicitly dedicated to punishment—however, the first five aeons are described as being home to archons who fear the divine and flee when presented with the mysteries. Interestingly, Jaldabaoth, who is placed within the Chaos punishment realm in all other Jeuian texts in which he appears (*4PS*b, *3PS*, and once in *1PS*) is here said to dwell in the third aeon. This could suggest that although all of the aeons were meant to be surpassed, the first five

17 See below, Section 2.3.2.

18 The concept of the sublunar realms being populated by various entities, especially including negative or flawed ones, was common in later Hellenistic cosmology; see Philo, *On Giants*. 2:6–8; Eph. 2:2; Tertullian, *Apology* 22; see also A.D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*: *What the Gospel of Judas Really Says*, (2007; revised edition London: Continuum, 2009), 53; R.A. Piper, "Jesus and the Conflict of Powers in Q: Two Q Miracle Stories," 323 n.20, in *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* A. Lindemann, ed. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 317–350.

aeons in particular served as places of punishment for the uninitiated at this point. The place of the three triple-powered gods or archons—the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ—is explicitly described as being without places of correction (*2 Jeu* B48(86),16–17), suggesting the possibility that all of the preceding aeons have a punishment aspect. Although one is admonished to live without sin, again the focus appears to be fidelity to the group and receiving the mysteries to be included in the Kingdom of Light, lack of which causes one to be stuck in these outer places.

The twelve aeons as a whole may represent the five sublunar and seven planetary realms one must surpass to reach the final destination. The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ serves as the middle point between the places of the left and right, and as a realm of waiting for those beings that have not yet but will eventually receive the mystery of forgiveness of sins and enter the Treasury.

Thus the aeons are here the lowest realms of the cosmos, the regions from the earth to the outskirts of the solar system through which one must ascend; the bottom regions among these serve as places of punishment or suffering for those who have not received the proper mysteries; the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ divides the cosmos into an upper and lower realm,[19] and the place of the right is the Treasury of Light, the final destination and resting place for the initiated.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Egyptian Ties*

3.1.1 Joining the Retinue of God

The Egyptian desire to remain in the presence of the highest lord of the underworld by virtue of becoming part of his court or retinue has been discussed in the last chapter.[20] *2 Jeu* also features the conversion of the disciples into a rank in the treasury of the true god, after they have completed all the mysteries of the preceding places and reached the innermost region: "But he, the unapproachable god, will cast forth from himself a light-power to come to you in the place of the true god, and give you the character of the treasury of the true god. And it will complete you in every pleroma, and make you into a rank in that treasury" (*2 Jeu* B37(75),26–32). They are thus allowed to remain in the presence of the true god, the lord of the afterlife, and the pinnacle to which a human could aspire.

19 One hesitates to describe these realms as "spiritual" or "material," as at this point material is still not viewed as uniformly negative.

20 See Section 1.3.1.1.

3.1.2 A Stellar Afterlife

The connection between Egyptian beliefs on the postmortem journey to the stars and the soul's ultimate destination in the celestial sphere in *1 Jeu* has also been discussed in the last chapter.[21] In *2 Jeu* where the Greco-Roman and Gnostic ideas of the planetary heavens and zodiacal sphere come more clearly into play, the disciples are told that at the end of their journey they shall remain as a rank in the place of the true god over the treasuries of light, again suggesting their conversion into a set of stars or a constellation.

There is further potential for Egyptian astronomical connections in *2 Jeu*'s instructions for traversing the twelve aeons. At each level one is given a set of three names to recite—perhaps reflecting the thirty-six decans or decan-stars originally used in Egyptian astral timekeeping prior to the implementation of the twelve-fold zodiac, and adopted to some extent in the Greco-Roman astrological scheme.[22] In the later periods these decans were divided into groups of three and associated with each of the twelve zodiacal signs. As a final note on potential astrological connections between Egyptian systems and those found in the *Books of Jeu*, it should be observed that in addition to the thirty-six decans, the Egyptians also acknowledged twenty-four hour stars, separate from the decanal belt.[23] In *2 Jeu*, the first twelve aeons feature three name-passwords each—connecting them with zodiac/decans of the ecliptic—and the thirteenth aeon contains twenty-four emanations. Perhaps this reflects an attempt to maintain the importance of astronomical divisions of the past, while still accommodating changing views on both the created realm and the upper realms of light.[24]

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21 See Section 1.3.1.2.

22 See Manilius, *Astronomica* IV.294–407, G.P. Goold, "Introduction" to Manilius' *Astronomica* (London: Heinemann Ltd., 1977), lxxxv–lxxxvii; see also J. Evans, "The Astrologer's Apparatus: A Picture of Professional Practice in Greco-Roman Egypt," 2, in *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 35 (2004), 1–44, and T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 28–29, especially the passage from Stobaeus, Excerpt 6, 1.21.9, 1.189. However, it is possible that the set of three names is simply reflecting the scheme of three watchers or guardians at each gate found in *1 Jeu* and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, rather than having stellar associations.

23 O. Neugebauer and R.A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, Vol. 2: *The Ramesside Star Clocks* (London: Brown University Press, 1969), 5.

24 It should be observed that the flight of the evil entities of the early aeons to the "west" as a negative realm is decidedly non-Egyptian, as shall be discussed further below.

3.1.3 Ritual Procedures

Parallels between the *Books of Jeu* and Egyptian religio-magical practices can also be detected in ritual elements beyond the gatekeepers and passwords. Certain spells involved "encircling … or facing in a particular direction—some spells were to be repeated four times, which probably implies facing the cardinal points from which danger might approach."[25] Both *Books of Jeu*, the richest in ritual detail of the extant Jeuian corpus, feature instances of reciting magical names or prayers while turning to the "four corners" of the treasury, world, or general location in which the words are being recited (*1 Jeu* B9(47),13–14; *2 Jeu* B22(60),31–B23(61),2; B25(63),9–11, B28(66),29–30, B29(67),26–28). The same procedure is found in *4 PS*a, when Jesus recites names to the four corners of the world before requesting the archontic beings to move aside and allow himself and the disciples passage (*4 PS*a 136[353–354]), and also before opening their eyes to the light (*4 PS*a 141[367]). Furthermore there are instances of prayers or rituals wherein Jesus has the disciples surround him and/or stand with their feet together, suggesting that they would stand together in a protective circle (*1 Jeu* B10(48),10–11; *2 Jeu* B23(61),2–3; B25(63),4–5; B28(66),28–29, B29(67),7–8). All of these rites—in *1 Jeu* reciting the name to suffice for passage through all of the treasuries, in *4 PS*a for safety from the aeonic archons and prior to revelation, and in *2 Jeu* during the baptisms to remove the influence of sin—are performed in a context where evil entities might wish to cause them harm or stop their progress, thus necessitating these defensive positions and maneuvers. The admonition to the disciples not to give the mysteries to any but those who are worthy—including a list of family members ("do not give them to father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or relative …" [*2 Jeu* B17(55),5–7])—also has its parallels in the *Book of the Dead*, where several spells are accompanied by the warning not to use them for anyone but oneself, not even one's father or son.[26] The expansion of the list in *2 Jeu* to include female family members reflects the later text's active encompassing of male and female discipleship in its language.

3.2 *Astrology in 2 Jeu*

As has been observed above, in *2 Jeu* the outline of the cosmos has a very different focus than *1 Jeu*. No more are the 60 treasuries set out in even ranks,

25 J.H. Taylor, *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 33.

26 See spells 133b, 137, 190 in *The Book of the Dead* OR *Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms* (T.G. Allen, trans. [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974]).

ruled by a demiurge and flanked by the planets. Previously always plural, the "Treasury of Light" is now often referred to as a single entity—although in the longest account of the places through which the ascending disciples will travel, there are at least two treasuries explicitly mentioned (*2 Jeu* B35(73),27). The place of the "true god" is still the farthest one can hope to reach, but this entity is now distinct from Jeu, who as the "father of the Treasury of Light" now remains several ranks behind. Much of the concern of this book has shifted to the twelve aeons, with the "Midst"—here with the Greek term as mentioned above—playing a minor role, existing above these aeons, and indeed above the "thirteenth aeon" that surmounts them. This is the beginning of the cosmology that sees its flowering in the books of the *Pistis Sophia*.

These twelve aeons are something of a puzzle. There is the obvious possibility that they represent the signs of the zodiac—and indeed, such is the role of the twelve aeons in *4Ps*a, the text with the closest ties to this one. The description of the aeons, however, also presents a potential reading as representing the five sublunar levels of chaos or the underworld followed by the seven planetary heavens (see *GosJud* 51,4–52,14; *ApJohn* III 17,17–20; BG 41,12–15, II 11,4–6).[27] The first five aeons, when presented with the appropriate signs and seals, "flee to the west and the left," the directions of evil. Names familiar from other traditions as evil entities, Jaldabaoth and Samaelo, have been appended by the author or compiler to the archons associated with the third and fourth aeons.[28] There is overall a sense that these are terrifying realms of malevolence.

A change occurs, however, at the sixth aeon—it is called the "Little Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ)," and "the archons of those places have a little goodness within them, because the archons of those places have believed" (*2 Jeu* B41(79),17–22). If the Midst might represent the path of the sun,[29] it is possible that the "Little Midst"

27 For the seven and five division, Z. Pleše explains the case of the *Apocryphon of John* by suggesting a mixed Greco-Egyptian origin involving a particular manner of constructing the world horoscope (*Poetics of the Gnostic Universe: Narrative and Cosmology in the* Apocryphon of John [Leiden: Brill, 2006], 183–184). A.D. DeConick suggests that it is a blending of two systems, one with focus on the seven planets, the other on the zodiac (A.D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 153). See also A.J. Welburn, "The Identity of the Archons in the 'Apocryphon Johannis,'" in *Vigiliae Christianae* 32 (1978) 241–254; A.D. DeConick, "Apostles as Archons: The Fight for Apostolic Authority and the Emergence of Gnosticism in the Tchacos Codex and Other Early Christian Literature," in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Tchacos Codex at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*, A.D. DeConick, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 255–257.

28 For further discussion of Jaldabaoth, see Section 2.3.3.3.

29 See *1 Jeu* chapter, Section 1.3.2.

represents the path of the moon—which moves at a slightly different angle to that of the sun, and indeed is the first of the seven planetary realms. The moon is generally considered to have a positive nature in ancient thought, and as a luminary in particular is sometimes set in a category with the sun apart from the five planets.[30] Here it leads into the remainder of the aeons, which do not flee in terror before divine knowledge, but simply withdraw to allow progress. It is thus possible that the seven aeons from the sixth to the twelfth represent the planetary realms, all of which have a neutral to positive aspect. This is again in contrast to other Gnostic cosmologies that attribute wholly negative qualities to the planetary "demons."[31]

To return for a moment to the possibility of direct zodiac correlation, it is interesting to note that for each aeon, regardless of the number of "archons of the aeon" introduced as its inhabitants, three names are called upon to allow passage to the next level.[32] As discussed in Section 2.3.1.2 above, this could be indicative of an acceptance of the concept of the decans of Egyptian astronomy, three subdivisions assigned to each sign of the zodiac with their own magical or divine names.

The fact that nowhere are any specific names or concepts given that might provide definite context for these entities makes a precise analysis impossible. The visible, planetary Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) of *1 Jeu* is conspicuously absent here before its sinister return in *4 Ps*a. The Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) appears above *all* of the aeons including the thirteenth, excluding it from a position as the path of the sun whether the aeons represent the zodiacal circle *or* the planetary and sublunar sphere. It represents a borderland between the lower, visible and upper, divine realms. A clue to the text, however, lies in the fact that names prominent in the Sethian tradition—Jaldabaoth, Barbelo, the invisible god—have been evidently (and at times clumsily) *appended* to an existing tradition. It could be possible, therefore, that both interpretations are in a sense true—that a zodiac scheme with accompanying decans has acquired an additional understanding

30 On the path of the moon and its importance—including as a division between light and darkness or the righteous and sinners—see *1 En* 41:5–8.

31 See the discussion in Z. Pleše, *Poetics of the Gnostic Universe*, 181–193. T. Rasimus gives an excellent discussion of the typical set of planetary demons and their permutations in a variety of Gnostic and heresiological sources; although his proposed correspondences for entities in *2 Jeu* are highly questionable (*Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 103–128; 104 for the chart of correspondences).

32 See n.22 above.

as the five chaos/seven heaven scheme found in certain Sethian texts such as the *Apocryphon of John* or the *Gospel of Judas*.[33] In any case, it is apparent that ascending beyond the thirteenth aeon takes one beyond the visible realm, and thus beyond the scope of the present section.

3.3 *Sethian Polemic*

Sethian (sometimes called "Classic Gnostic"[34]) traces within the Jeuian texts are faint, yet present. As with many of the early Gnostic groups, there has recently been much debate as to what constitutes "Sethian" teaching.[35] One of the most intriguing arguments comes from T. Rasimus' recent study of the Ophites, arguing for the differentiation of Ophite, Barbeloite, and Sethite material in the body of texts frequently cited as "Sethian."[36] However, that proposal includes the combination and blending of these various strands in different texts. This section is not intended to discuss the finer points of these traditions and their boundaries, and for present purposes, "Sethian" may be used as a heuristic term to describe the body of texts that embraces all three strands.

The *Books of Jeu* and *Pistis Sophia* lack most of the hallmarks of Sethianism, but signs of the adoption of certain figures and concepts—albeit far removed from their original context and significance—appear from *2 Jeu* onwards. There is a degree of mythological overlap that is not explicable without positing some interaction with the Sethian system, but the Jeuians' different understanding

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33 It should be noted that in attributions of planetary ties to the signs of the zodiac, it is more typical to find them split into two groups of six; one diurnal and one nocturnal group, headed up by the sun and the moon respectively. That this division is likely the case in at least certain parts of the Jeuians' cosmological history is evident from the references to the "six great aeons" in *2 Jeu* B30(68),21, and in the Jabraoth and Sabaoth myth in *4Ps*a.

34 See B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 5–21; B.A. Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 51–100.

35 For example, H.-M. Schenke, "The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*, Vol. 2, B. Layton, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 588–616; F. Wisse, "Stalking Those Elusive Sethians" in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, Vol. 2, 563–576; J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Québec: University of Laval Press, 2001), A.H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

36 *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). He also uses the term "Classic Gnostic" to refer to the Sethian corpus (5).

of cosmic structure, soteriology, and theogony is maintained. The nature of the overlap does not suggest a familiarity with any particular Sethian text as they are currently available,[37] but rather utilizes a selection of figures from Sethian teaching that would perhaps have been the most prominent: those from the top of the hierarchy, and the ruler of the bottom. The fact that the figures being adopted are used in different ways from their original roles—primarily by demoting them from higher to lower status—suggests that the Jeuian authors considered the Sethian system seriously enough to need to account for it, taking those figures they felt were most important and fixing them into their own system as they saw fit. This results in the characters in question possessing entirely different natures from their Sethian originals. The fact that these unique interpretations of the figures remain relatively constant supports the position that the Jeuian authors operated within their own tradition and theological trajectory, accepting outside influences only in the context of their own system.

3.3.1 The Sethian "Trinity"

The first traces of decidedly Sethian influence appear in the journey through the aeons. In the twelfth aeon the disciples are told they will encounter the invisible god, the Barbelo, and the unbegotten god (ⲁⲅⲉⲛⲛⲏⲧⲟⲥ—2 *Jeu* B44(82),21).[38] This appears to be an adoption of the highest trinity in the Sethian texts, epitomized in the *Apocryphon of John*, which consists of the Invisible Spirit, the Barbelo, and the Self-begotten One (Autogenes)—or Father, Mother, and Son. In that text, after the Self-generated one is completed as son of the Barbelo via the Invisible Spirit, twelve aeons are given to attend the Self-begotten (*ApJohn* BG 34,10–11; III 12,18–19; II 8, 22–23), and the lower powers worship them: "I glorify and praise you, Invisible Spirit. For it is because of you that the all has come into being, and (it is) into you (that) the all (returns). I praise you and the Self-begotten and the three aeons: the Father, the Mother, and the Son, the perfect power" (*ApJohn* BG 35,13–20; see also III 13,11–16; II 9,6–11; IV 14,63–65).

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37 However, the later *Pistis Sophia* texts do seem to show knowledge of some version of the *Apocryphon of John*—which is unsurprising, given its apparent popularity based on the number of remaining copies.

38 The term "unbegotten" is used with some frequency within the Sethian texts to refer to a variety of beings; however, it does not appear elsewhere in reference to the third member of the original triad. It may be that the author of this text was confused by the use of this term in these other circumstances. The significance of the change in terminology remains uncertain, as this is the only appearance of the full Sethian trinity in the Jeuian corpus.

In *2 Jeu* this triad is far removed from the pinnacle of existence afforded it in the Sethian world, placed *within* the twelve material aeons. Although "there are many other gods in that aeon who in the Treasury of Light are called archons" (*2 Jeu* B44(82),24–27) who rule over all the aeons and serve these three, they remain firmly in the material domain. The fact that it refers to "gods" who are known as mere archons in the higher Treasury suggests that while the author knows the Sethian hierarchy, the importance afforded to this trinity, and the various ranks unfolding below it, he views it as misguided and blind to the true heights of reality represented by his own theogony. The main point of the insertion of these figures appears to be a deliberate demotion of them from spiritual to material entities. By placing them within the twelve material aeons and stating that others wrongly call them "gods," the author emphasizes the superiority of his own system over that of the Sethians.

It has been noted above that this triad is likely a secondary addition to a preexisting list of aeons and their inhabitants. The typical pattern for each aeon (with some minor variations in wording) lists the mystery name(s) of its archons: "When you reach the (x)th aeon, the archons (...), (...), and (...) will come before you." This is followed by instructions to present the proper defenses, which include a seal, its name, a cipher, and commanding the same archon names to withdraw themselves. However, in the twelfth aeon, the description of the invisible god, Barbelo and unbegotten god appears to have been inserted with little concern for continuity. It is somewhat jarring after the flow of the previous sections. After this introduction, however, the text continues with the usual pattern: "Again the archons of that aeon will come before you. These are their names: ϫⲁⲣⲃⲩⲱⲑⲱ. ⲁⲣⲍⲱⲍⲁ. ⲍⲁⲍⲁϫⲁⲱⲑ" (*2 Jeu* B44(82),30–B45(83),1). This is followed by a seal, its name, a cipher, and a series of different mystery names, suggesting further corruption has entered the text. Despite the final corruption, the rest of the section corresponds precisely with the pattern established by the previous aeons—with the exception of the block of text describing the Sethian triad. The author or compiler of this text must have considered this grouping of beings significant enough to require explanation within his own preexisting system—by inserting them within the twelve material aeons and demoting them from gods to archons, subordinate to his conception of the Treasury of Light and the godhead.

3.3.2 The Invisible God and the Triple Powered Ones

This slight to the Sethian trinity is immediately followed by the appearance in the thirteenth aeon of the "great invisible god" and the "great virgin spirit" (*2 Jeu* B45(83),17–18). This may be a conflation of the Invisible Spirit of the Sethian primal triad into two figures, as it was sometimes referred to as the invisible,

virginal Spirit.[39] Here there is no trinity; instead there are "24 emanations of the invisible god." This combination is closer to that which is found in the later Jeuian texts, although the 24 emanations are not explicitly Sethian. The thirteenth aeon remains the domain of the great invisible god throughout the rest of the texts, usually in conjunction with the three triple-powered gods. The triple-powered ones in their *2 Jeu* context will be discussed presently; for the ruling entities of the thirteenth aeon here it is sufficient to observe that again in contrast to their Sethian counterpart, this position at the pinnacle of the material aeons, the place of the left, is the highest place they achieve in the Jeuian system. In fact, the 24 emanations of the invisible god are envious of the disciples for their knowledge of the mysteries and wish to hold them back, returning to a sense of opposition that was lacking in aeons six through twelve. The thirteenth aeon and its inhabitants, including its Sethian refugees, have an ambivalent status on the border of the realm of the left—again, a far cry from their Sethian equivalents.

The Triple-Powered One plays a complicated role in the Sethian texts. It appears primarily in the ascent-focused treatises, *Zostrianos*, the *Three Steles of Seth*, *Allogenes* and *Marsanes*. It is chiefly associated with the Invisible Spirit or the Barbelo, and regardless of its nature, it is always close to the Invisible Spirit. Thus in *Allogenes* "there appeared an eternal Life, the Invisible and Triple-powered Spirit" (*Allogenes* 66,32–34); while in *Marsanes* "the activity of that one (the Invisible Spirit) is the Triple-powered One" (*Marsanes* 7,16–17). It frequently represents a set of Platonic powers, such as Existence-Vitality-Mentality.[40] The Jeuian texts, however, lack any concern with Platonic metaphysics, and the Triple-Powered One becomes three separate triple-powered entities, whose "triple powers" remain unspecified. In *2 Jeu* alone are the triple-powered ones located apart from the invisible god, placed above that entity in the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ). Here they are superior to the great invisible god and the Barbelo, poised to ultimately gain entry to the Kingdom of Light by virtue of their belief in the mysteries of the Treasury of Light. They are the only non-human entities that will be privy to the final mystery, thus setting them apart from all of the lower aeonic beings, including those of high Sethian origin now relegated to the aeonic regions.[41]

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39 See *ApJohn* II 4,34–35 and throughout; BG 32, 7–8; *GosEg* III 44,11–12; 49,23–25; 53,16–17; 65,10–12.

40 J.D. Turner discusses the nature and relationships of the entities in the Platonizing Sethian treatises at some length; see *Sethian Gnosticism*, 499–556; on the Triple-Powered One see especially 512–531.

41 *2 Jeu* B47(85),22–25: "… for those three archons are inside all the aeons, and they which

3.3.3 Jaldabaoth

Jaldabaoth is the misshapen, ignorant creation of the fallen Sophia in the Sethian system. As a demonized version of the Platonic demiurge, he is responsible for the creation of fate and the planets, as well as the material world and humanity. The Jeuian texts lack detailed discussion of the creation of the cosmos or the evil entities in proximity to it, and much of Jaldabaoth's accomplishments in terms of fate and the enslavement of souls are attributed to Sabaoth the Adamas.[42] However, Jaldabaoth continues to appear, and may suggest a modicum of Sethian influence.

In *2 Jeu* he appears in the third aeon, followed in the fourth aeon by Samaelo. These two names, along with the third name Sakla(s), are all used to refer to Jaldabaoth in certain Sethian texts (*ApJohn* II 11,18; *TrimProt* [39,27]; *HypArch* 87,3; 94,25; 95,7–8). Much as the triple-powered ones are multiplied in the Jeuian texts, the author may have mistaken Samael as a separate figure rather than as another name for Jaldabaoth. Furthermore, these names seem to have been appended to an existing schema of archons, sticking out dramatically among the list of unfamiliar mystery names such as ϫογⲛϫⲉⲱϫ and ϛⲱϛⲉⲁϛ. It is likely no coincidence that these names have been added in the first five aeons, those below the "little Midst" that are associated with the west/left and fear of the mysteries. It is possible that these two figures were added at the same time as the Sethian trinity, as discussed above. It should be noted that in the *Apocryphon of John*, Jaldabaoth was tied to five sublunar realms for which he created rulers (*ApJohn* III 17,19; BG 41,15). Demoted from a position of arrogant

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are outside all the treasuries are superior to all the gods which are in all the aeons …"

42 Although both "Sabaoth" and "Adamas" appear in various versions of Sethian mythology, they frequently take on a more positive role: Sabaoth is the offspring of the wicked demiurge (*ApJohn* II 10.34; III 16,25; BG 40.10; IV 26,19) who is sometimes thought to have repented and been exalted over his father (*HypArch* 95,15–25; see also *OrigWorld* 103,32–104,26); Adamas is one of the high divine beings (*ApJohn* III 13,4; *GosEg* III 49,18–19; 50,20–21; 51,5–6.21–22; 55,17–18; 65,15; IV 61,8–22; 62,18–19.30–31; 67,3–4; 77,11–12; *Zost* 6,26; 30,4–5; 51,14; *StelesSeth* 118,25–26; *GosJud* 48,21–26; see also J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 79), the Son of Man, the father of Seth, and closely connected with the divine triad. Although the Jeuian texts frequently denigrate Sethian figures, it is not common to completely change their connections or lineage. Thus, the evil "Sabaoth, the Adamas" in the Jeuian texts apparently derives from a different tradition. Sabaoth the Good in the Jeuian works is described as the offspring of Jeu and is consistently a resident of the realms of light, and thus is also not equivalent to the Sethian Sabaoth, who originates from Jaldabaoth but later repents.

world creator and ruler of the planetary and sublunar realms, he is slotted in amongst the already numerous lower archons set to bar the path of the uninitiated during ascent.

3.4 *Interaction with Manichaeans*

Although the *Pistis Sophia* texts show stronger connections, at this early stage of Jeuian tradition Manichaean influence is still minimal, and tenuous at best. The Virgin of Light is a prominent figure in Manichaean tradition, and a figure with this title, also called the judge, appears briefly in *2 Jeu*. Here she is called upon to participate in the baptism of fire (*2 Jeu* B25(63),26–B26(64),32), a rite performed in the world, while the Manichaeans eschewed all external rites and worldly purifications (Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 20:3–4),[43] viewing matter as inherently evil such that no amount of cleansing can purify it. Portions of the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* both have a strong emphasis on baptisms and rituals to rid the earthly body of archontic influence, and the Virgin of Light plays a key role in at least one of these rites. Thus, although the title is similar, the actual nature and role of the figure is significantly different between these traditions, particularly as she is represented in *2 Jeu*.[44]

3.5 *Interaction with Catholic Christians*

It is apparent that baptismal language regarding the water of life, fire, and Holy Spirit found in Matthew 3:11[45] was known to this group, and that the technical term "baptism" was used in purificatory or initiatory contexts by the time *2 Jeu* was written. However, the contents of the rituals themselves show minimal ties to any known form of Christian baptism, catholic or otherwise.[46] There is no

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43 See also L. Cirillo, "The Mani Logion: 'The Purification That Was Spoken About Is That Which Comes Through Gnosis' (CMC 84, 9–12)" in *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism*, J.D. Beduhn, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 45–59. Although J.K. Coyle warns against taking Faustus' statements at face value (*Manichaeism and Its Legacy* [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 90), his examples to the contrary derive from "Gnostic" evidence—including the *Pistis Sophia*—not from Manichaean sources.

44 For more on the Virgin of Light in Manichaean tradition, see Section 4.3.4.2.

45 Although the terminology is also found in Luke 3:16, given the strong Matthean preference in the texts as a whole, the reference most likely derives from Matthew.

46 On the diversity of practice in early Christian baptism, see P.F. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009), 55–97; P.F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144–170. On potential significance of the Sethian or "classic Gnostic" rite of the five seals, see J.-M. Sevrin, *Le*

immersion in water (or indeed the presence of any water at all, aside from the transformation of the wine in the first rite of "the water of life of the seven virgins of the light"). Although there is fragrant incense that is used to draw an elaborate seal on the forehead at the end of the ritual, there is no kingly or pre-burial anointing of the head or body, or sealing of the sense organs. While linen garments are specified, there is no symbolic stripping and donning of new robes. Those being baptized do not give a renunciation of evil or a profession of faith, or indeed say anything at all. The inclusion of bread and wine also may seem to have eucharistic undertones, but although they are referred to as present and part of the offering, there are no associated prayers and no attention is given to their significance or consumption. Nowhere in the texts is association given between Jesus' earthly body or salvific power and a ritual meal, so the inclusion of these elements likely lacked such connotations for the author. In short, all associations with rebirth, Jesus' own baptism or anointing in either this world or the divine realm, or prayers to Jesus or a Trinitarian deity group, are completely missing. Despite these differences, it is interesting to note that these texts present Jesus as the one performing the baptisms, thus lending the weight of his own authority to their effectiveness and holiness for those who would perform or receive them later on. Although Matthew suggests that Jesus will baptize in fire and Holy Spirit, this never explicitly occurs in the canonical gospels. It would thus appear that the author knew this part of the Matthean tradition and some of the terminology involved, but that he had no idea of, or agreement with, the symbolism or nature of more mainstream Christian rituals.

4 Key Concepts

While *1 Jeu* provides information on the final ascent of the soul through the highest realms, *2 Jeu* presents more preliminary ritual material—initiatory baptisms or purification rituals, and instructions for the ascent through the material aeons or visible cosmos. Before one could reach the Treasury of Light,

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dossier baptismale Séthien: Études sur la sacramentaire gnostique (Québec: University of Laval Press, 1986), 247–294; A.H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 79; A.H.B. Logan, "The Mystery of the Five Seals: Gnostic Initiation Reconsidered," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997), 188–206. On Gnostic ritual more generally, see J.D. Turner, "Ritual in Gnosticism," in J.D. Turner and R. Majercik, eds., *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures and Texts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 83–139.

it was necessary to first receive the purification of the baptisms, and travel through the lower cosmic realms of the sublunar and planetary spheres. Here the focus will be on the initiatory or purification rites, with a brief discussion of the aeonic ascension to follow.

4.1 *Rites of Purification*

Prior to receiving any of the information on ascending through the aeons or treasuries, the disciples must receive the "three baptisms:" water, fire, and Holy Spirit, followed by the mystery to remove the evil of the archons. The description of these rituals is the most detailed earthly ritual manual found in any known early Christian Gnostic text. It includes not only the prayers recited by the officiant, but also a complex list of plant-based materials for the initiate to wear or offer up, detailed drawings of the seals to be used at the beginning and end of each ritual, and lists of the mystical ciphers and names needed to prove one's knowledge or worthiness for the rite.

Before discussing the individual rituals, the prerequisites for undergoing them deserve some attention. Prior to being allowed to receive any baptism, the disciples "had left behind them their fathers and their brothers, and their wives and their children, and they had left behind them the whole life of this world and they had followed him [Jesus] for twelve years, and they had fulfilled all the injunctions with which he had enjoined them" (*2 Jeu* B19(57),20–25; see also B18(56),14–15). One was expected to hold the beliefs and lifestyle of the group above any family or worldly ties. Whether or not twelve years as a dedicated disciple was actually required of the typical follower before being admitted to any of the baptisms, the fact that this amount of time is specified suggests that at this early stage, a lengthy period of proving one's dedication to the moral precepts or teachings and lifestyle of the group was required before initiation into the mysteries, even at the most basic level.

The text also presents the sins to be avoided if one is to be worthy to receive them. Jesus says, "command him to whom you will give these mysteries not to swear falsely, nor to swear at all, nor to fornicate, nor to commit adultery, nor to steal, nor to desire anything, nor to love silver, nor to love gold, nor to invoke the name of the archons, nor the name of their angels, over any matter, nor to steal, nor to curse, nor to accuse falsely, nor to slander, but to let their yea be yea, and their nay be nay" (*2 Jeu* B19(57),1–12). This makes it clear that these baptisms should be given to other loyal followers, but also represents the first and simplest outline of acts or behaviors considered sinful by the group. This list is greatly developed and expanded in the following texts, particularly in terms of the punishments to be expected for a sinful life. Here, however, the focus remains the benefits to be gained from faithfulness, loyalty, and righteous

living—receipt of the baptisms and mysteries, resulting in immortality and entry into the inheritances of light.

4.1.1 Baptism of Water

Of the four earthly rites given, the first of the baptisms has the most detailed ritual information out of the set. The first instruction given to the disciples is to fetch two pitchers of wine from a pure man or woman. This is the only place in any of the ritual outlines where the source of an ingredient is highlighted or referred to in any way. It furthermore is the only rite to describe the sign that occurs at its completion—the wine obtained from the pure individual is transformed into water. This suggests a connection between the purity of the ingredient and its source, and the success of the ritual.

Between these opening and closing events, a variety of elements combine to bring about the initial purification of the disciples. Jesus prepares the disciples, making them wear linen garments, giving them the appropriate cipher—the cipher of the seven voices[47]—to hold, sealing them with the proper seal, and placing certain plants in their mouths, on their heads, and in their hands.[48] He also prepares the offering, arranging the altar with linen cloth, vine branches, the incense offering, two pitchers of wine, a cup of wine, and bread-loaves according to the number of disciples. This latter detail shows that this was intended as an adjustable group ritual in practice—rather than specifying the amount of bread, it is left to be determined by the number of people undergoing the ritual at a given time.

After Jesus and the disciples turn to the four corners of the world, suggesting the addressing or warding off evil from the four cardinal directions,[49] Jesus has the disciples stand "with their feet together," most likely in a circle around the central altar and Jesus as officiant. Jesus does all of the talking, opening with a

47 Note that Cregheur translates the word ϕωνη as "vowels" in the context of the baptismal ciphers, although he translates the same term as "voice" elsewhere. Although it is certainly possible that the seven voices refer to the vowel sounds, this is not clear in the text, so the earlier translation has been preserved here.

48 The seals found here and in *1 Jeu* will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter. For more detail on the individual material ingredients used in this and the following rituals, see E. Evans, "Ritual in the *Second Book of Jeu*," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Late Antique Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, A.D. DeConick, G. Shaw, and J.D. Turner, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 137–159.

49 J.H. Taylor, *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 33; Section 2.3.1.3.

series of *voces magicae* or *nomina barbara* interspersed with amens. This is the only rite that begins this way, rather than with a plea to the Father to hear. As the first and most introductory rite, this may suggest that this opening was meant to demonstrate the worthiness of the participants through knowledge of these mystery words at the outset, while in the later rites, having already undergone the initial cleansing already proved some degree of worthiness.

After the initial series of *nomina barbara*, Jesus addresses his Father, saying "Hear me my Father, thou father of all fatherhoods, thou infinite Light" (*2 Jeu* B23(61),11–13). This address is standard in the following rites. He calls upon the fifteen helpers of the seven virgins of light, naming each of them. He requests that they baptize the disciples with the water of life of the seven virgins of the light, and that Zorokothora bring this water into one of the pitchers of wine. At that moment, the wine is duly transmuted into water, the disciples are baptized, partake of the offering, and are sealed with the second seal (*2 Jeu* B24(62),1–6). It is possible that the transformation of wine into water is a deliberate subversion of Jesus' actions at the wedding of Cana (Jn. 2:7–9), although there is little other sign that the author was familiar with the gospel of John, so this remains speculation. Although it is said to number the recipients "among the inheritance of the Kingdom of Light," this initial rite is evidently low in relative prestige. The beings called upon are minor in the cosmic hierarchy: not the seven virgins of light themselves, but their helpers are requested to bring the baptismal water. Jesus' Father, as high deity, plays a minimal role.

4.1.2 Baptism of Fire

The setup of this rite is very similar to the previous one, without the stipulation for how to obtain the wine—perhaps because the wine no longer plays a role in the sign of the rite's successfulness. Once again Jesus arranges the disciples with linen garments, crowns, seals, the cipher of the seven voices, and plants in the mouth and hands. Here it specifies that knotgrass[50] is placed beneath their feet, as well: this is the only rite to name a plant under the feet. The altar is set up with linen cloth, vine and olive branches, the incense offering, two pitchers of wine, a cup of wine, and bread according to the number of the disciples. After facing the four directions or corners of the world, the prayer begins: "Hear me, my Father, thou father of all fatherhoods, thou infinite Light" (*2 Jeu* B25(63),12–13).

Although it begins directly with a call to Jesus' Father rather than with an initial series of magical names, this prayer is much longer and more complicated

50 E. Crégheur translates this plant, πολγονον, as "horsetail."

than the preceding one. Instead of asking simply for generic sins to be forgiven, as do the other two baptisms, here Jesus lists types of faults to be wiped out: slanders, curses, false oaths, thefts, lies, false accusations, fornications, adulteries, desires, avarice, and all things done from childhood to the present. Then he calls upon Zorokothora Melchisedek to bring the water of the baptism of fire of the Virgin of Light, the judge (*2 Jeu* B25(63),26–28). It is noteworthy that this is the only place in the text to use the name Melchisedek[51]—perhaps reflecting later influence, as *4PS*a uses the full name "Zorokothora Melchisedek" consistently. The list of sins may also reflect the influence of a text like *4PS*a, since they are consistent with the types of sins given in the account of the rulers of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ.

After this, Jesus calls upon the Father's "imperishable names which are in the Treasury of Light" (*2 Jeu* B25(63),29–30), a series of *nomina barbara* interspersed with amens, the type of formula found in the beginning of the baptism of water. Then, it *repeats* the call to the Father to hear, as well as repeating the request for the water of the baptism of fire of the Virgin of Light to be brought down—this time by Zorokothora only, without the name Melchisedek. This repeated section may be further evidence that the account here is compiled from multiple sources. Since the pattern of this second portion is more in line with the procedure in the two other baptisms, using only the name Zorokothora and not listing specific sins, it is likely that this was the more original version.

It goes on to call upon the Virgin of Light herself, and *her* imperishable names, requesting her as judge to forgive the sins of the disciples. It is noteworthy that the seal inscribed on the disciple's foreheads at the completion of the ritual is also called the "seal of the Virgin of Light" (*2 Jeu* B26(64),31), reinforcing the important role she plays in this ritual. However, in the end Jesus says, "Now my Father, if thou hast forgiven their sins and thou hast erased their iniquities, and thou hast caused them to be numbered within the Kingdom of Light, do thou give me a sign in the fire of this fragrant incense." It is ultimately the Father who forgives the sins and completes the ritual. Whether the direct call to the Virgin of Light is from yet another source is uncertain; certainly she performs in the capacity of judging souls, but the notion of her *forgiving* sins is unusual.

Finally, it has been observed above that the precise sign that shows the success of the rite is left unspecified. It is something that happens with the fire

51 Even here, the "Melchisedek" portion is abbreviated to "ⲙⲉⲗ;" however it is clear from the later texts that Melchisedek is meant.

of the incense, unsurprising in the rite called the baptism of fire, but the specific signifier is left unsaid. This may be indicative of a notion that beyond the lowest ritual, the signs must be experienced firsthand, and are not to be written down—even in an instructional manual such as this. In any case, this rite, as with the water baptism, is said to number the disciples within the inheritance of the Kingdom of Light—probably indicating their admission to a higher level within the inheritance, which had many regions.[52]

4.1.3 Baptism of the Holy Spirit

This is the shortest of the three baptisms. Without preamble, Jesus once again sets up the altar with incense, wine, and bread as before, but without linen cloth to cover it. The disciples again wear linen and a crown of branches, with plants in the hands and mouth, and the cipher of the seven voices in the hands; again they turn to the four corners of the world, and are sealed with a seal before the verbal prayer begins. The prayer begins with the call to Jesus' Father as in the previous rite; this is followed by a series of *nomina barbara* called the Father's "imperishable names," without amens interspersed throughout. Jesus requests that the disciples' unspecified sins and iniquities be forgiven or erased, and that a sign should appear in the offering. When this unspecified sign appears, he gives part of the offering to the disciples, and seals their foreheads with the seal of the seven virgins of light. Again, the success of this ritual brings the disciples admission into a part of the inheritance of the Kingdom of Light.

4.1.4 Mystery to Remove the Evil of the Archons

Having received the three baptisms, Jesus turns his attention to performing the mystery to take away the evil of the archons. This time an altar is constructed by the sea (*2 Jeu* B28(66),32–33).[53] Once again the disciples are dressed in linen, crowned with a plant, sealed with a seal, and something is placed in their mouths. Again they stand with feet together and face the four corners of the world, and Jesus calls upon his Father with a number of imperishable names. With this prayer he requests that Sabaoth the Adamas and his archons be compelled to take away their evil from the disciples.

Although this rite has many similarities to the preceding ones, there are some noteworthy differences, as well. This is the only ritual to list non-plant materials among the offerings, including asbestos and agate-stone. While in all three baptisms, the item placed in the mouth is a substance called ⲕⲩⲛⲟⲕⲉⲫⲁⲗⲟⲛ

52 The inheritance(s) will be explored more thoroughly in Chs. 6 and 7.

53 This parallels the rite at the beginning of *4Ps*a 136[353].

(cynocephalia),[54] here it is frankincense, which had previously appeared in the incense offering of the baptism of fire. There is no bread or wine used here. Instead of the cipher of the seven voices used in the three baptisms, here the cipher of the first amen is found; at the completion of the rite, the disciples' foreheads are sealed with the seal of the two amens. There is no sign requested to show the rite's success, but upon its completion, the disciples rejoice because they have been made immortal, and proceed to follow Jesus to all the places to which they were to go.

It would seem that this rite is operating under a slightly different set of principles. This is possibly a result of this ritual being a stage beyond the baptisms, thus requiring different materials. Although the sins performed by the individual were forgiven or wiped out with the previous rituals, here the head of evil in the Jeuian cosmological system is commanded to permanently remove its influence from the participants. Rather than simply being assured a place somewhere within the inheritance of Kingdom of Light—which was vast, with many hierarchical levels—this guarantees their immortality, and their ability to travel wherever Jesus might lead them.

4.1.5 Summary of the Purification Rituals

This set of rituals is clearly meant to take place on earth. Although there is no location specified, aside from the seaside location of the final mystery to remove the evil of the archons, they all involve a variety of material preparations, including gathering the special type of garment for initiates, various plants and aromatic incense ingredients, an altar, bread, and wine. Many of the ingredients for the offering would have been expensive, but expense to be initiated into a religious group was not unexpected—the mystery religions of the period also had a hefty expense associated with their initiations. For example, Apuleius in *Metamorphoses* makes note of the difficulty the main character has in coming up with the resources to undergo the second initiation in the Isis mysteries, while for the third he had become successful enough that it was not an issue (*Meta* 11.28–30); also the archaeological evidence remaining from the Mithraic mysteries shows that a great deal of money would have been required not only in setting up the mithraeums, but also in providing the materials for the ritual meals and sacrifices.[55] As with the requirement of a lengthy period of faithfulness as a novice before being permitted to receive the lowest of these

54 E. Crégheur: snapdragon; V. MacDermot: anemone; see also E. Evans, "Ritual in the *Second Book of Jeu*," 143.

55 H. Bowden, *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2010), 196.

rites, this monetary provision was likely a part of the demonstration of the initiate's worthiness. Although there is the command that one who receives the mysteries must not love gold or silver (*2 Jeu* B19(57),5–6), it is not specified that they must give up all of their worldly possessions as a prerequisite for receiving them.

These rituals furthermore represent a progressive series. The concept of a series of rituals for initiation was also well known from the mystery religions. As noted above, the mysteries of Isis apparently could involve at least three stages. The Mithraic mysteries had seven ranks.[56] The Eleusinian mysteries had Greater and Lesser mysteries.[57] Clement of Alexandria says of the Greek mysteries in general that after purifications come "the lesser mysteries which have the function of teaching, and preparation for what is to come; and then the greater mysteries which concern everything, where there is no longer learning, but contemplation and consideration of nature and of realities" (*Stromata* 5.70.7–71.1).[58] This may be parallel to the idea of greater and lesser mysteries found later in *2PS*. While the initial stages of some of these rites in the mystery religions are open for description, involving fasting, purification or bathing, etc, the final stage is always left out. It is kept secret, meant to be experienced by the initiates. These baptisms, along with the mystery to remove the evil of the archons, may be meant to portray stages of initiation as well, with the final sign at the end of each rite left out deliberately. These rites are a requirement to receive any further mystical knowledge; each one grants the recipient the right to advance slightly further in the inheritances—the knowledge of the Kingdom or Treasury of Light, the divine realm. Although these rituals are described in immediate succession here, it is probable that an individual would have undergone each one individually, with some time between the receipt of one and the next. Thus, with the baptism of water certain secret knowledge would be granted, and after a period of continuing to adhere to the group's precepts, the baptism of fire could be undergone and the knowledge associated with it gained. Furthermore, if the Treasury of Light/inheritances in fact represent the visible stars, then the immortality of those who complete the final ritual might

56 See for example R. Beck, *Beck on Mithraism: Collected Works with New Essays* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 15; G. Lease, "Mithraism and Christianity: Borrowings and Transformations," 1325, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* Vol. 2.23.2, W. Haase, ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1306–1332.

57 H. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 32.

58 A. Roberts, J. Donaldson and A.C. Coxe, trans., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2 (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885).

have been thought to entail gaining a position among the celestial retinue—in line with earlier Egyptian afterlife goals.[59]

4.2 *Ritual Ascension Instructions—The Material Aeons*

After the description of the baptismal purifications, the text turns its attention to the realms one must traverse in order to reach the Treasury—the thirteen/fourteen material aeons, and the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ).[60] The procedure used to pass through these realms is almost identical to that found in the Treasury ascent scheme in *1 Jeu*, with each level having its own named seal, a cipher, and a series of names to be recited.[61] The description of the words or phrases needed for the aeonic ascent is more formulaic. With slight variation, in each case it says, "When you reach the (x)th aeon, (…), (…), (…), the archons of that aeon will come before you. Seal yourselves with this seal … this is its name (…). Say it once only. Hold this cipher (…) in your hands. When you have finished sealing yourself with this seal and you have said its name once only, say these defences also: 'Withdraw yourselves (…) (…) (…) [same or similar to archons names above] because we call upon (…) (…) (…) [different *nomina barbara*].'" Although repetitive, each level has its own, unique set of names, ciphers, and seals to memorize for successful passage. There is a combination of material (the cipher or pebble held in the hands), visual (the drawn seal), and verbal (the recitation of the seal name, the archon names, and the final defensive names) elements that demonstrate the practiced ritual nature of this description. However, prior to imparting this information, Jesus says that these mysteries are to be performed "when you come forth from the body" (*2 Jeu* B30(68),18–19; B39(77),5). Although a meditative ascent in life cannot be fully discounted as a possibility, it seems that unlike the purification rituals discussed above, the material is primarily intended for memorization and material preparation to be used in an ultimately post-mortem context.

5 Summary

The *Second Book of Jeu* is a ritual handbook that leads the initiate from a series of purifying, possibly initiatory rituals into preparation for an ultimate

59 See Section 1.3.1.2.

60 On the fourteenth aeon and the likelihood that it is a mistaken interpolation, see above, Section 2.2.3.

61 For more information on these elements, see Section 1.4.1.

postmortem ascent through the visible cosmic realms. The fact that there are multiple baptisms or purification rituals suggests that there were multiple levels of members or initiates within the group. Each ritual imparts a different level of purification on the road to immortality. Although all of these rites are presented in close succession here, it is unlikely they were all performed at once for an initiate. Rather, the text is serving as a handbook for the priest or officiant, to be consulted for the performance of the appropriate rite at the appropriate time. It is mentioned that the disciples had left behind their lives and families and followed Jesus for twelve years before receiving these rites, suggesting that there was an uninitiated set as well that still followed, listening to the basic teachings or myths and trying to live according to the moral precepts of the group before receiving the first baptism or initiatory stage.

The names of the first three purifying rites or baptisms—those of water, fire, and Holy Spirit—clearly reflect phrasing found in the Christian gospels, most likely Matthew in particular. However, the contents of these rituals show almost no further connection with more mainstream Christian baptisms, instead reflecting strong Egyptian ritual influence in its motions and material elements. Just as with the adoption of Jesus or Jeu, it seems that the group founders had heard of certain ideas or phrases from Christian Gnosis, but without any grasp of or interest in their significance, instead transplanting them directly into their existing Egyptian practical context. Furthermore, the group appears to have been engaged in a direct struggle with at least one other Christian Gnostic group in its immediate cultural environment, as demonstrated by the polemic against apparent Sethian myth and imagery. All of the extant Jeuian texts are a testament to the flexible attitude the group had toward modifying their presentation of the lower realms and their residents, while leaving the upper regions and the core cast of divine beings and soteriological beliefs intact.

The four rituals presented in *2 Jeu* involve gradual levels of purification and interaction with increasingly higher divine entities, eventually resulting in freedom from influence by evil powers, immortality, and inclusion in the Kingdom of the Light. Once these rituals are performed, it allows the pathways of the heavens to be opened to the recipient upon death. Travel along these pathways requires further knowledge and credentials, demonstrated to the archons guarding the way using formulae similar to those used in the purification rites, and almost identical to the methods used in *1 Jeu*. Thus, as with the preceding text, cosmological outlining and the imparting of knowledge for passage through the various realms are of the utmost importance. Although focusing on a postmortem journey, again mental and potentially material groundwork is necessary. By memorizing the correct *nomina barbara* and the provision of the unique seals and ciphers for each region, the living initiate underwent a

rigorous, personal ritual of spiritual preparation for the ascent to come. The instructions outline a journey through the visible cosmos, beginning on earth and moving up through the sublunar and planetary realms, ultimately reaching the Kingdom of Light. *2 Jeu* thus presents the path of the initiate step-by-step from a neophyte stage all the way to ultimate immortalization beyond the cosmos.

CHAPTER 3

Diagrams in the *Books of Jeu*

The large number of diagrams in the *Books of Jeu* is one of the most noteworthy—and fascinating—aspects of these texts. It is the only extant early Gnostic document containing diagrams or images. That even among the paucity of scholarship on the texts so little has been written on them is a testament to their mysteriousness and obscurity. P.C. Finney notes these pictures "have nothing to do with the world as we know it. They are conceptual images, abstracted from nature and nonrepresentational."[1] Unfortunately, the concepts they depict are quite esoteric and largely lost, in part never to be recovered due to the poor state of the manuscript. Thus this chapter must begin with the cautionary statement that what follows is not an attempt at a definitive interpretation of their meaning. Rather, it is an opening investigation into what will hopefully result in a scholarly conversation on their possible significance in the context of their users. Since the diagrams appear only in the two *Books of Jeu*, and their general format and probable usage appears to be similar between the two texts, here they will receive in-depth treatment in a chapter of their own.

The fact that so many diagrams are included in these two texts, the primary ritual handbooks of the innermost Jeuian mysteries, is evidence of their importance in the beliefs and practices of the group that utilized them. That they are meticulously given in extensive systematic patterns demonstrates how vital they were considered to be—it was necessary to have knowledge of the whole system, including the characters and seals of each individual head or ruler. Even in the *Pistis Sophia* texts, which do not themselves include such diagrams, knowledge of them is *presumed* necessary (*2PS* 99[247]; *3PS* 112[289–291]). Despite the suggestion that some aspects of these mysteries might be considered unnecessary in the later stages of the group's development, the mysteries Jesus promises to present the disciples still include "the heads of the mysteries … in all their types and their ciphers and the seals of the last space" (*2PS* 99[247]). This strongly reflects the traditions found in *1 Jeu* especially, as each treasury has a head and an associated seal and cipher, and indeed in that text Jeu's development is described in terms of types. It is thus probable that *2PS* still considers the material contained in *1 Jeu*, if not *2 Jeu* as well, to be nec-

1 P.C. Finney, "Did Gnostics Make Pictures?", 437; in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978*, Vol. 1, B. Layton, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 434–454.

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essary for the soul's ascent and salvation. Knowledge of the diagrams and their use is therefore useful for an understanding of the system of the Jeuian texts as a whole.

Although similar symbols with comparable usage abound in the Medieval and Renaissance periods,[2] there are few other surviving examples from the period in which the Jeuian texts likely arose. Since it is impossible to determine whether a continuous tradition or mindset existed between these periods, the focus shall remain on the diagrams present in the *Books of Jeu* themselves.[3] Some preliminary discussion of the use of mystical diagrams and images in the Greco-Roman period will, however, provide a helpful introduction to the topic.

1 Religious and Magical Use of Seals, Diagrams and Images

1.1 *Hekhalot or Jewish Ascent Literature*

Hekhalot literature can be defined as "the pre-kabbalistic corpus of mystical texts that give instructions on how to ascend (or 'descend') to the celestial 'palaces' or the 'merkabah,' God's heavenly throne-chariot," elements of which can be identified from the early centuries of the Common Era.[4] The Hekhalot, or palaces of the divine world, may suggest images similar to the treasuries to be traversed in *1 Jeu*. The palaces each have angelic guardians, whose names the person ascending must memorize and to which they must show the appropriate seals: "The name of each one (angel)—you show to him his seal and he brings you into his palace."[5] However, it is not clear of what the seals consisted,

2 See, for example, the *Picatrix* (10th/11th century), Peter de Abano's *Heptameron seu elementa magica* (1496), Johannes Trithemius' *Steganographia* (1500), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's *Occulta Philosophia* (1533), John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), the *Arbatel de magia veterum* (1575), *The Lesser Key of Solomon*.

3 When possible, the image from the codex will be included, but frequently the manuscript has become so damaged the images have not been preserved. In those cases C. Schmidt's reconstructions will be included, which are in turn often based on C.G. Woide and M.G. Schwartze's transcriptions, done when the manuscript was in better condition. They are the form most scholars have used to this point; however, frequently they are not an accurate reflection of the original.

4 J.R. Davila, "The Ancient Jewish Apocalypses and the *Hekhalot* Literature," 105, in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, A.D. DeConick, ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 105–125.

5 *Hekhalot Zutarti*, § 413, quoted in R.M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 257.

and their images are not depicted. They may have been written directly on the body, or on pieces of paper attached to the body, or some object held in the hands, or indeed engraved on rings.[6] They are described, however, "as magical names, either of the angels or of the aspects of the godhead, that must be shown as passports to the gate-keepers at the entrances to the seven palaces."[7] In both *1* and *2 Jeu*, the instructions for safe passage through the aeons and treasuries involve a ψῆφος, a pebble, on which is inscribed a specific number which likely represents some sort of name or phrase of power.[8] In these instructions, the seal-diagram, its name, and the cipher-number are all closely connected both in the text and in the ascension procedure. G. Scholem notes the parallels between the display of seals to guardians in the Hekhalot texts and the *Books of Jeu*, and the attribution of a name to each of the seals, proposing an originally Hebrew origin for the formulas accompanying the baptismal seals.[9]

1.2 *Greco-Roman Magic*

Although images and magical signs abound in the Greek Magical Papyri and gems, none of them provide a direct parallel for the diagrams found in the *Books of Jeu*. Many of them feature drawings of gods or demons with formulaic writing around them, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic representations participating in the magical action—far from the abstract imagery guaranteeing safe passage in a religious mystical ascent. It is, however, worthwhile to briefly discuss the use of symbols, or "characters," found frequently in both the papyri and the gems. Although many of them look like modifications of Greek letters, one of the most common symbols is an eight-pointed star consisting of four crossed lines with circles at each point.[10] The eight-pointed star has prehistoric origins,

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6 R.M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 317–319.

7 G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (2nd ed.; New York: JTSA, 1961), 32–33.

8 The use of numbers to represent particular names was common in ancient magic; one of the best examples of this is Βαινχωωωχ, the numerical value of whose name, 3663, appears in place of the name in certain magical papyri. For the stone/name connection compare also Rev. 2:17, where the saints are promised a stone with a secret name written upon it. On the ψῆφος in Jeuian ritual, see Section 1.4.1.3.

9 See G. Scholem, "Über eine Formel in den koptisch-gnostischen Schriften und ihren jüdischen Ursprung," in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 30 (1931), 170–176.

10 See C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), 194–195.

FIGURE 3.1 *Magic gems with characters*

A. Mastrocinque, Catalogue des intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques (*Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2014*), *no. 159.*

Slg. Skoluda MN068. S. Michel, Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder: magische Gemmen (*München: Biering and Brinkmann, 2001*), *no. 102. Photo courtesy of Beate and Wolfgang Skoluda.*

but is perhaps best known from its association with the Babylonian goddess Ištar, from the Old Babylonian to Neo-Babylonian periods.[11] In the context of these later gems and magic, A.A. Barb gives its origin as the Babylonian determinative for names of gods.[12] The eight-pointed figure is certainly viewed as a powerful one for ascension past particular celestial entities found in *1* and *2 Jeu*, as shall be seen below.

The specific meaning of the characters is unknown, but it is clear that they were widespread—they "entered the magical traditions of all late-antique and medieval peoples, languages, and religions—from Ethiopia to Armenia and from Al-Andalus to Yemen."[13] Despite the dating of much of the material being uncertain, the fact that it is so widespread suggests that even in later texts, earlier traditions may still be present. They could be used as individual symbols,

11 F. Rochberg, "Heaven and Earth: Divine-Human Relations in Mesopotamian Celestial Divination," 174n.20, in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, S. Noegel, J. Walker, and B. Wheeler eds. (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 169–186.

12 "Diva Matrix: A faked gnostic intaglio in the possession of P.P. Rubens and the iconology of a symbol," 216n.48, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953), 193–238.

13 G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 271.

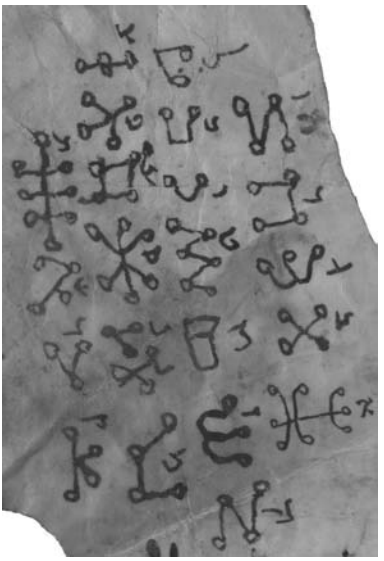


FIGURE 3.2

Sample characters. A Geniza fragment, with an attempt to "decipher" the characters as letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Detail of Cambridge University Library, T-S K12.60 (verso). Reproduced with permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

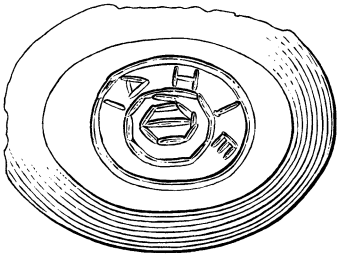
or grouped together as a mystical alphabet. This latter usage was the subject of much speculation among later people, with many attempts made to decipher their code through ascribing each sign an alphabetic equivalent.[14]

Greco-Egyptian magic was most likely their ultimate origin, and the presence of similar diagrams for sealing and ascent purposes in the *Books of Jeu* comes as little surprise. That the eight-pointed figure in particular is so prevalent both in the magical gems/papyri and the *Books of Jeu* especially speaks to the symbolic importance accorded to it. The fact that in the context of *2 Jeu* it primarily appears in the category of "seals" (as opposed to types or characters, which will be discussed below) suggests that the Jeuian author viewed it as particularly efficacious in an amuletic sense, as the seals are presented to give protection from potentially hostile beings and to gain access to higher regions.

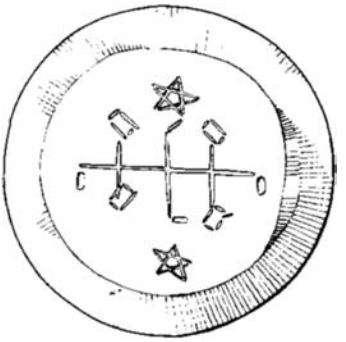
Beyond the prevalence of the eight-pointed star figure, a few other magical gems feature some intriguing patterns (Figure 3.3). The one on the left is similar to some of the character diagrams in *1 Jeu*, while the one on the right bears a resemblance to some of the seals given for the ascent through the twelve aeons in *2 Jeu*. The latter in particular is interesting given the two stars pictured with the diagram, and the potential connection of the aeons with a celestial ascent/star journey. Solar and stellar associations are fairly common among the

14 G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 274.

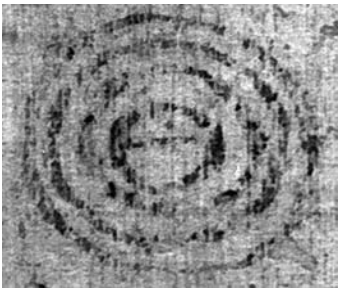
FIGURE 3.3 *Comparison of gems and figures from the* Books of Jeu



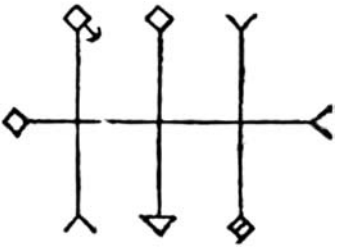
Brit. Mus. Inv. G 233, EA 56233. Source: S. Michel, Die Magischen Gemmen im Britische Museum—Band 1 Text (London: The British Museum Press, 2001), no. 227. Drawing reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Brit. Mus. Inv. G 1986,5–1,152. Source: S. Michel, Die Magischen Gemmen im Britische Museum, no. 560. Drawing reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



"Character" for Jeu 23 (1 Jeu). MS Bruce 96, f. 40r. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford



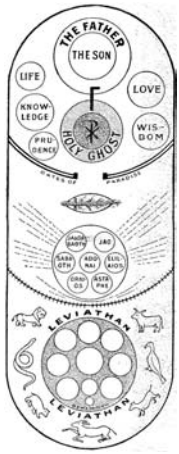
Seal for 9th aeon (2 Jeu—Schmidt's reproduction)

gems. This is not to argue that these gems are associated with the Jeuian group, but simply to point out the presence of similar motifs. The function of the gems is uncertain; however, it has already been noted that the instructions for passing through both the aeons and the treasuries include holding a ψῆφος, a pebble, on which is inscribed a specific number that likely stands for a name. There is a possibility that the seal might also be engraved on such a stone for use in ascension.

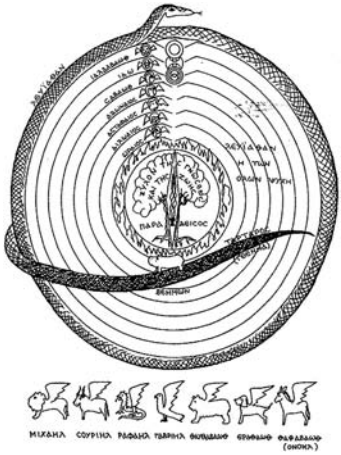
1.3 *The Ophite Diagram*

Despite being the most famous diagram in the history of "Gnosticism," this figure is not actually preserved. The extensive description of it given by Origen in *Contra Celsum* is not entirely clear, and has resulted in an impressive variety of reconstructions by scholars.[15] The section actually seems to give two separate descriptions, that of Celsus and that of Origen, the two accounts differing in certain respects. The diagram consisted of circles representing a map of the celestial (and possibly supracelestial[16]) regions, and other images that may have represented seals to be used in the ascent ceremony.[17]

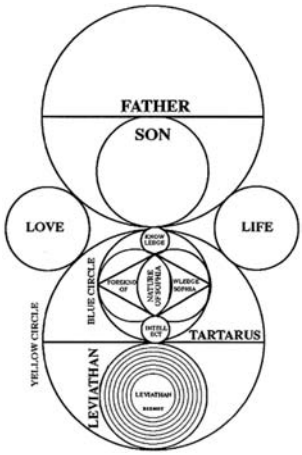
FIGURE 3.4 *Sample of restorations of the Ophite diagram*



J. Arendzen, "Gnosticism," 597, in The Catholic Encyclopedia 6 (New York: Appleton, 1909) 592–602.



B. Witte, Das Ophitendiagramm nach Origenes' Contra Celsum (Altenberge: Oros, 1993) 142.



A. Mastrocinque, From Jewish Magic to Gnosticism (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 101.

15 For a collection of the different modern scholarly renderings, see plates 1–9 in T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

16 Scholars who feel that the supracelestial realms are included in the diagram include A. Mastrocinque, *From Jewish Magic to Gnosticism*, 96–101; A.H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 43; T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 244.

17 A.D. DeConick, "The Road for Souls Is Through the Planets: The Mysteries of the Ophites Mapped," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Mani-*

The diagram was accompanied by the names and descriptions of the seven planetary archons as well as passwords to pass by them.[18] It may have served as an aid for the journey of the soul through the various regions, either as a postmortem or a meditative ascent.[19] This is in conjunction with a "sealing" or anointing, which also might be associated with a deathbed ritual[20] or an initiation rite.[21] There is little scholarly agreement on these issues;[22] however, these possibilities are parallel to those of the rituals and ascent descriptions found in *1* and *2 Jeu*. The baptisms, with their sealings of the disciples, appear to be initiatory rather than deathbed purifications—as is likely the case with the Ophite sealing, which is set up by Celsus as a parallel to Mithraic initiation rites (Origen, *Cels* 6.22). Indeed, the term "seal" was used in the early church to refer to baptism or part of the initiation ceremony.[23] However, the ascent procedure is more vague. The instructions are most likely for use in an ultimate postmortem journey, possibly prefigured by one or more ecstatic or meditative journeys.[24] This again seems to be the most probable interpretation for the

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chaean and Other Late Antique Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson, A.D. DeConick, G. Shaw, and J.D. Turner, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 37–74.

18 Origen, *Cels* 6.22–38.

19 Some scholars argue that the text may present a descent rather than an ascent, as Origen presents the passwords in order from outermost to innermost (B. Witte, *Das Ophitendiagramm nach Origenes' Contra Celsum VI 22–38* (Altenberge: Oros, 1993), 35–39, 101–102, 113, 125–128). However, it is possible that Origen simply read them in order from the top to the bottom of the list, without implication for the ritual order.

20 T. Hopfner, "Das Diagramm der Ophiten," 88–89, in *Charisteria Alois Rzach zum Achtzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht* (Reichenberg: Stiepel, 1930), 86–98; N. Denzey, "Stalking Those Elusive Ophites: The Ophite Diagrams Reconsidered," 98, 105–106; in *Essays in Honour of Frederik Wisse, ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies* 33 (2005), 89–122; A.H.B. Logan, *The Gnostics*, 41–42. Denzey also suggests that the two diagrams described might have been for different purposes, one for a mortuary ritual and one for a living ecstatic ascent (115).

21 B. Witte, Das Ophitendiagramm, 39, 101–102; T. Rasimus, Paradise Reconsidered, 249–255; A.D. DeConick, "The Road for Souls Is Through the Planets."

22 For a discussion of arguments for both sides, see T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 244–250.

23 H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 342n1; E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), especially 312–313 and 338–339. On the "Gnostic" mystery of the five seals as initiation, see A.H.B. Logan, "The Mystery of the Five Seals: Gnostic Initiation Reconsidered," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997), 188–206.

24 On the prevalence of this combination of themes in the Hellenistic world, see A.F. Segal,

Ophite diagram's usage, as well. After having been sealed or purified in life, the names or passwords must be memorized before the lengthy journey of the soul past a variety of cosmic pitfalls.[25] Celsus' description of certain people returning "into the archontic forms so that some become lions, some bulls, and other serpents or eagles or bears or dogs" (Origen, *Cels* 6.33) seems to suggest a notion of theriomorphic reincarnation for those who do not successfully complete the postmortem ascent.

The Ophite diagram could serve as a contemplative tool, a map, and a memorization aid for the series of passwords to be presented. Although the *Books of Jeu* do not present an overall pictorial cosmological map, the Jeu-diagrams in *1 Jeu* would seem to serve a similar purpose, outlining the various levels, depicting the location of each specific watcher or guardian, and laying out in order the other contents and residents at each stage.[26] At any rate, the preservation of discussion on the Ophite diagram, known both to certain pagans and Christians, demonstrates that among certain sects in the second and third centuries, diagrams were an accepted mode of religious instruction and practice, particularly as ascent preparation. The Jeuians, while certainly not Ophite, clearly embraced a version of this method for presentation of the divine realms.

2 Diagrams in the *Books of Jeu*

As A.F. Segal observes, "knowing the origin tells us something about a cultural item but it falls far short of an adequate description of its meaning in any particular culture."[27] Knowing something about the use of seals and diagrams in wider Greco-Roman religious culture, and even within other branches of non-mainstream Christianity, is helpful; however, the group that produced the *Books of Jeu* did so on their own terms. Thus, having touched on a number of

"Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and their Environment," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* Vol. 2.23.2, ed. W. Haase (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 1333–1394.

25 T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 277.

26 See Section 1.2.1. B.A. Pearson also suggests a similarity of purpose between the diagrams in the *Books of Jeu* and the Ophite diagram, although he attributes them both to the same specific "Gnostic" religious tradition; see *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 266–267.

27 A.F. Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 175.

ancient contexts in which seals or mystical diagrams were used, an analysis of the images found in the *Books of Jeu* themselves shall now be presented.[28] These can be subdivided into categories: "types" (ⲧⲩⲡⲟⲥ) of Jeu; "characters" (ⲭⲁⲣⲁⲕⲧⲏⲣ) of each of the Jeu-beings in the treasuries; and "seals" (ⲥⲫⲣⲁⲅⲓⲥ) used in baptism and ascent.

2.1 *The Types of Jeu*

These appear only in the beginning of *1 Jeu*, and refer to the phases of Jeu prior to his emanation of the entities populating all of the treasuries. The final types also possess characters, suggesting that the following phases flow naturally from these initial forms. In Figure 3.5 below both the images from the codex and those from C. Schmidt's reconstruction will be included, as significant differences are present between the originals and reconstructions which have affected past scholars' interpretations.

G.R.S. Mead proposes that squares represent substance while circles represent gods or energy.[29] It is true that the squares containing the names in the following treasury diagrams do indeed seem to be representative of locations, depicting the gates and setup of each region, while the character-diagrams, which consist primarily of circular or ovoid shapes, are associated with the entity at the head of each region. However, it should be noted that certain character diagrams also utilize square or rectangular forms, and it is unlikely that a blending of substance and energy is implied in that handful of instances.

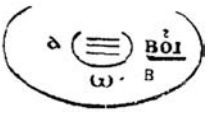
The diagrams appear to present a progression. The first type, before Jeu is moved to emanate (ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲟⲩⲕⲓⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲩⲧⲁⲩⲉ-ⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ), opens up as he is moved and about to bring forth emanations (ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲧⲁⲩⲟ-ⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲛ ⲉⲣⲣⲁⲓ). If he brings forth (ⲉⲩⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲩⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ), or as he is about to emanate (ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ), it seems that the three voice-lines emerge from the central circle, and form concentric circles around a central kernel. The smaller diagram to the left may represent this emerging, with a line coming forth from the central circle. These diagrams appear to represent the potential for emanation, which shortly comes to fruition.

28 On the diagrams or treasury outlines accompanying the character diagrams, see Section 1.2.1.

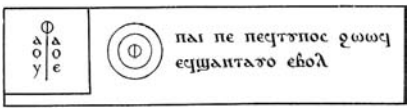
29 G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1905; reprint: New York: University Books, 1960), 536.

FIGURE 3.5 *Types of Jeu*[30]

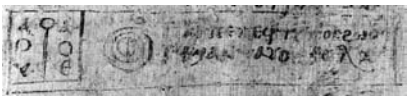
Type before he was moved to bring forth emanations

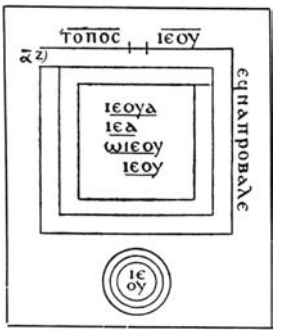


Type when he will bring forth emanations



Type if he brings forth





Top: Type before he emanated. Bottom: His character (*on his face*)

The first voice; Jeu 1 (*first of the treasury diagrams, with character below*)

Type when he has emanated

30 Codex images are from MS Bruce 96, f. 16r, 16v, 18r, 18v, 20r. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

The following diagram is essentially identical to the previous type, now described as being before he emanates (ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧϥⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲏ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ). This highlights the imminence of the forthcoming emanation, which immediately follows. The inclusion of his character diagram, said to be on his face, here further acts as a reflection of what is to come. The seven concentric circles that make up his character appear to transform for the production of the first treasury: as the Father moves him, he makes a sound; and "when he had emitted a sound, there came forth this voice which is the emanation. It was of this type as it proceeded forth from one to another, treasury by treasury" (*1 Jeu* C4(8),16–19). The following diagram represents that voice, which is the prototype for the following treasury diagrams/maps. There are four concentric squares and three concentric circles, both of which contain the name of Jeu—perhaps a reflection of the pouring forth of Jeu's original character, which consisted of seven concentric circles. It is labeled as his place, or *topos*, suggesting the locative or physical nature of the treasury diagrams. Finally, there appears his type when he has emanated (ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲏ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ): now all seven circles are represented as squares complete with gates (represented by alphas), containing the name of Jeu "in the tongue of [Jesus'] Father," ⲓⲟⲉⲓⲁⲱⲑⲱⲩⲓⲭⲱⲗⲙⲓⲱ Jeu, as it was given in the text prior to his emanating. His transformation from potential to actual ruler of the treasuries is complete. It still remains, however, for the ranks of the treasuries to come forth and populate them. Again the Father moves him, and Jeu again gives voice from his place, moving his own emanations to emanate. Thus the discussion shifts from the true god to his emanations, and their emanations which fill the remaining treasuries.

2.2 *Characters of the Heads of the Treasuries*

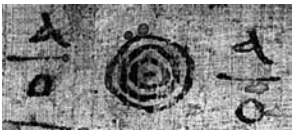
Each of the treasuries is home to a multitude of emanations, ruled by a being with a mystery name suffixed with the name Jeu. This ruler is depicted in the center of the treasury map, with pathways leading to him covered by veils and guarded by watchers.[31] In each instance, below this representation of the treasury layout there is a diagram representing the character of that treasury's head. The character diagrams share many characteristics with the types discussed above. They frequently consist of concentric circles of varying numbers. Some are divided by spokes or diameters; some have squares or rectangles; and some depict vowels as part of the pattern.

31 For more on the details of the maps and their arrangement, see Section 1.2.1.

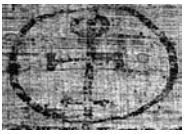
FIGURE 3.6 *Characters of the treasury rulers*[32]

Jeu 2

Jeu 3

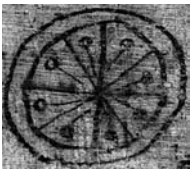


Jeu 4

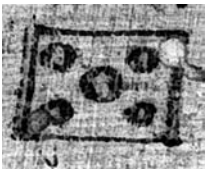


Jeu 5

Jeu 6



Jeu 7



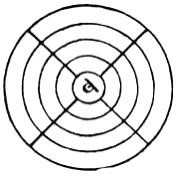
Jeu 8

Jeu 9

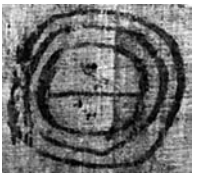
Jeu 10

Jeu 11

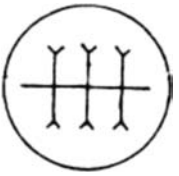
Jeu 12



Jeu 14



Jeu 15



Jeu 16

Jeu 17

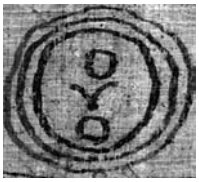
Jeu 18

Jeu 19

Jeu 20

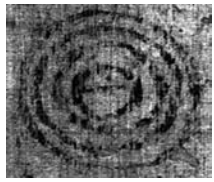
32 Codex images are from MS Bruce 96, f. 20^{r}, 20^{v}, 22^{r}, 22^{v}, 24^{r}, 24^{v}, 26^{r}, 26^{v}, 28^{r}, 28^{v}, 32^{r}, 34^{r}, 34^{v}, 36^{r}, 36^{v}, 38^{r}, 40^{r}, 40^{v}, 42^{v}, 44^{v}. Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

FIGURE 3.6 *Characters of the treasury rulers* (cont.)



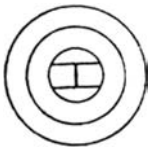
Jeu 21

Jeu 22

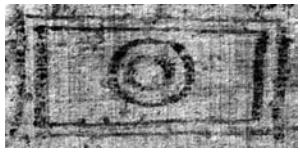


Jeu 23

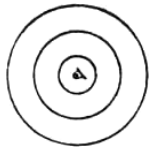
Jeu 24



Jeu 25



Jeu 26



Jeu 27

Jeu 28

No information is given as to the use of these symbols; the text simply labels each, "His character." It is likely that as with the character of the first Jeu, these are represented on their faces. This could suggest that they represent identifying marks on the Jeu-entities themselves, as opposed to the seals which are shown for permission to pass through their realms.[33] The system by which the characters were derived, however, remains obscure, and with over half of them missing, any interpretation will remain hypothetical. It should be noted that their use is dissimilar to the more typical Greco-Roman magical use of the term "*characteres*," which as discussed above usually refers to a sort of magical alphabet that often appears in sequences of several in a row. In addition to being visually dissimilar, these are symbols of entities, not meant as an alphabetic code. They are presented individually, perhaps as identifying marks for the beings to be encountered along the ascension path. Given that this entire section appears to serve as a map, this usage would be logical.

2.3 *Seals*

As opposed to the types and characters, which appear to be primarily symbolic or representational, seals are used in practical or ritual contexts.[34] There are three types of instances in which seals are used: ascension through the

33 E. Crégheur suggests that the character images may also have been carved into wood, stone, or metal as a stamp (*Édition critique, traduction et introduction des 'deux Livres de Iéou'* (*MS Bruce 96*), *avec des notes philologiques et textuelles* [PhD diss, University of Laval, 2013], 137), much as the seals may have been used.

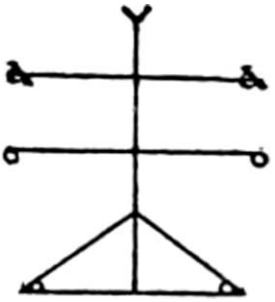
34 For references to seals in various other Gnostic contexts, see E. Crégheur, *Édition critique*, 155n.506.

treasuries (*1 Jeu*), ascension through the aeons (*2 Jeu*), and in the course of the baptisms/mystery to remove the evil of the archons (*2 Jeu*). The usage of the seals for both levels of ascension is similar, although the texts are separate and use slightly different procedures.

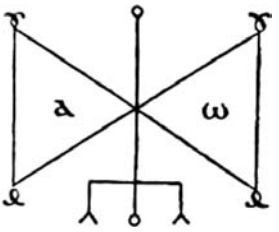
2.3.1 Treasury Seals

The treasury seals are part of a set of information required to pass through each treasury *en route* to the place of the true god. In addition to the seal with which one must seal oneself, there is also the name of the seal to be recited once; a "cipher," or number likely inscribed on a pebble, which must be held

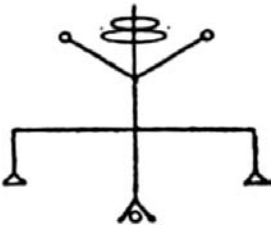
FIGURE 3.7 *Treasury seals and their names*



54th(?) Treasury
Seal Name: ⲍⲁⲓⲉⲱⲭⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲟⲧⲗⲁ (*70331*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:* ⲁⲁⲓⲱⲉⲱⲁⲍ

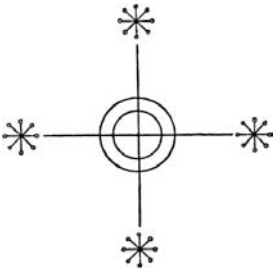


55th(?) Treasury
Seal Name: ⲍⲱϫⲁⲉⲍⲱⲍ
Cipher: ⲗⲫⲓⲉ (*30515*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:*
ⲱⲱⲓⲉⲏⲍⲁⲍⲁⲏⲁⲍⲁ

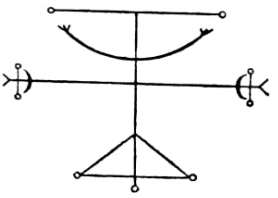


56th Treasury
Seal Name: ⲍⲱⲁⲍⲉⲟⲩⲉ
Cipher: ⲭⲩⲓ (*90410*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:* ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉⲍⲱⲁⲍ

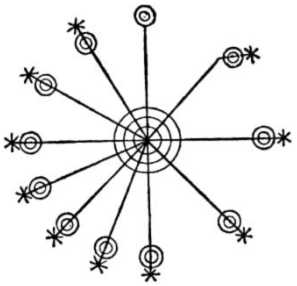
57th Treasury
Seal Name:
ⲓⲉⲁⲍⲱⲏⲏⲍⲁⲥⲁⲉⲍ
Cipher: ⲭⲩⲓⲑ (*90419*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:*
ⲍⲱⲍⲱⲍⲱⲓⲉⲏⲍⲱⲁ



58th Treasury
Seal Name: ⲍⲁⲁⲓⲩⲍⲱⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲭⲣⲕⲃ (*90122*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:* ⲉⲉⲉⲉⲓⲉⲏ
ⲍⲏⲱⲍⲁⲁⲓⲍⲉ



59th Treasury
Seal Name: ⲍⲏⲏⲁⲱⲉⲍⲱⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲭⲣⲡⲓⲍ (*90187*)
Recite (*thrice*)*:* ⲍⲱⲟⲟⲓⲩⲱⲏⲍⲁ



6oth Treasury
Seal Name: ϫⲁϫⲁϥⲁⲍⲁⲍⲱⲍⲁⲏ
Cipher: ⲗⲱⲡⲉ (*30885*)[35]
Recite (*thrice*)*:*
ⲏⲏⲍⲟⲏⲁⲍⲁⲍⲱⲁⲗⲁⲱⲍⲁⲏⲍ

in one hand; and a second name that must be recited three times. That the ascender must seal himself with the seal lends the diagrams a more active ritual purpose. The use of names/seals in conjunction with a mystical ascent in Hekhalot literature, and the necessity of holding signs or amulets in hand in certain adjuration contexts, have been discussed above.[36] All of the elements here combine to display the knowledge of the ascender, which in turn conveys his worthiness to ascend. When the signs are shown and the proper words recited, all of the guardians move away, allowing passage through the treasury.

In contrast to the circle patterns of the types and characters discussed so far, the seals consist primarily of straight lines and angular figures. Also coming to the fore are the spoke- or star-patterns, generally of eight points, which are furthermore of great importance among the aeon ascension seals. It is possible these seals were meant to be carved into a pebble or gem, perhaps along with the accompanying cipher-number, which would be carried to impress the seal on the bearer at the correct station. The term seal, or σφραγίς, in addition to an impression or mark, also refers to the stone or signet of a seal-ring.[37] The prominence of engraved gemstones with amuletic roles in Greco-Roman culture, some with patterns similar to those of these seals, has been seen above. That physical objects would be considered part of the preparation for what is most likely a post-mortem ascent is not entirely surprising, when one considers

35 Note that E. Crégheur gives the cipher number as 30885 as does Schmidt, but shows the Coptic cipher as ⲗⲏⲡⲉ after Woide.

36 Section 3.1.1.

37 See the definition in Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, (7th ed. 1883) 1513–1514.

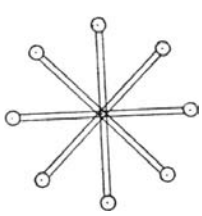
the Egyptian practice of leaving items with the deceased—including copies of the *Book of the Dead*, in case the person required help remembering the long and complex series of names and spells to be recited at the proper junctures.[38] The "Orphic" gold lamellae represent examples of Greco-Roman-era texts for aid in the post-mortem journey; one might also consider the Greco-Roman practice of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased, to pay for the ferry ride across the river Styx.

2.3.2 Aeon Seals

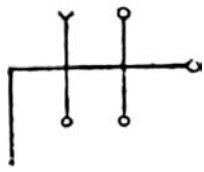
The aeon seals share many characteristics with the treasury seals, including the prevalence of straight lines or star patterns, and their inclusion in formulas for practical use in ascension.

Instead of the one name to be repeated thrice as in the treasury pattern, here there are three unique names to be called upon after the presentation of the seal, name, and cipher.[39] The cipher is now to be held in both hands, rather than just one. It is interesting to note that the ciphers, up to the 8th aeon, begin with the numeral corresponding to the aeon.[40]

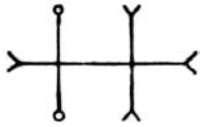
FIGURE 3.8 *Aeon seals and their names*



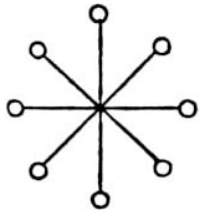
1st Aeon
Seal Name: ⲍⲱⲍⲉⲍⲏ
Cipher: ⲁⲣⲓⲑ (*119*)



2nd Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲑⲱⲍⲱⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲃⲥⲓⲑ (*2219*)



3rd Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲍⲉⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲅⲧⲏⲑ (*3349*)



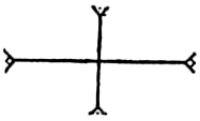
4th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲁⲍⲱⲍⲏⲱ
Cipher: ⲇⲫⲛⲉ (*4555*)

38 Although the *Book of the Dead* ceased to be used as a corpus of funerary literature in the first century BCE (J.H. Taylor, *Journey through the afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* [London: The British Museum Press, 2010], 59), motifs from it continued to be utilized.

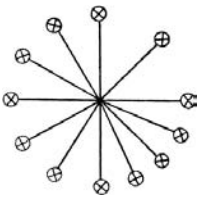
39 The number of names is longer in the 13th and 14th aeons. The pattern for the first twelve may be related to their connection with the zodiac, and an association of the 36 decanal stars with these regions. See Section 2.3.

40 Here and with some of the baptismal seals, the cipher numbers are also spelled out in words beside the numerical version. Since the numbers are not written out in full for the ciphers accompanying the treasury seals, which have a similar function but which appear in a text that seems to have slightly earlier origins, it seems likely that the long

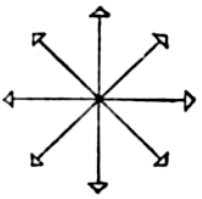
FIGURE 3.8 *Aeon seals and their names* (cont.)



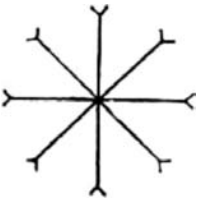
5th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲁⲍⲏⲱⲍⲁ
Cipher: ⲉⲧⲧⲍⲟ (*5369*)



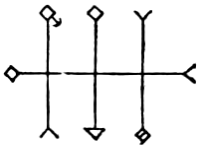
6th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲁⲭⲱⲱⲱⲏⲁⲍⲟⲍ
Cipher: ⲥⲣⲓⲉ (*6115*)



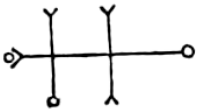
7th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲭⲱⲍⲱⲫⲣⲁⲍⲁⲍ
Cipher: ⲍⲱⲡⲟ (*7889*)



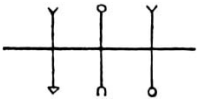
8th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲍⲁⲱⲍ
Cipher: ⲏⲛⲇ (*8054*)



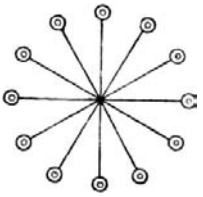
9th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲫⲣⲁⲕⲁⲥ
Cipher: ⲃⲱⲡⲟ (*2889*)



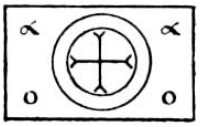
10th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲑⲱⲍⲁⲱⲍ
Cipher: ⲇⲫⲛⲟ (*4559*)



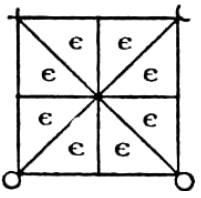
11th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲍⲁⲍⲏ
Cipher: ⲉⲫⲛⲏ (*5558*)



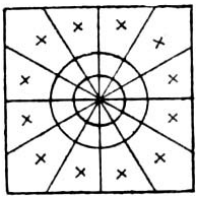
12th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲁⲣⲣⲕⲁ ...
Cipher: ⲑⲱⲡⲉ (*9885*)



13th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲁⲯⲣⲁⲣⲁⲥ
Cipher: ⲏⲱⲛⲉ (*8855*)



14th Aeon
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲉⲍⲏⲍⲏⲓⲁⲍⲁⲭ
Cipher: ⲑⲱⲯⲟ (*9869*)[41]



ⲏⲉⲥⲟⲥ (*?*)—*Triple Powers*
Seal Name:
ⲍⲱⲱⲉⲍⲱⲏⲍⲁⲓⲱ
Cipher: ⲉⲫⲛⲉ (*5555*)

versions accompanying the aeon seals are a secondary addition to prevent errors in the ritual preparations or in later copies. However, within the numerical and written ciphers for the aeons, the two versions do not always match entirely, suggesting that error has already crept into the transmission.

41 Note that there are discrepancies between the cipher numerals and written numbers for the 6th and 14th aeons.

That no less than four of the seals consist of versions of the eight-pointed star demonstrates the significance of this figure. It clearly represents a powerful emblem for protection in these dangerous realms. Its use in the seals for the treasuries as well confirms the belief in its potency for ascent past supraterrestrial beings by the group producing these texts. There may be some clue to origins of parts of the diagrams in Egyptian hieroglyphics: for example, the symbol for the sun , or pillar , several of which in early times were envisioned to be supporting heaven.[42] Given the apparent Egyptian provenance for the origins of the group, this is an attractive possibility; however, the fact that only parts of the diagrams have such potential influence, and the likely temporal distance of the group from a setting where the hieroglyphs would be well-known, raise caution in embracing such a suggestion. In any case, the use of the symbols in the context of the seals is obscure, and any deeper interpretations of their meanings remain hypothetical.

2.3.3 Baptismal Seals

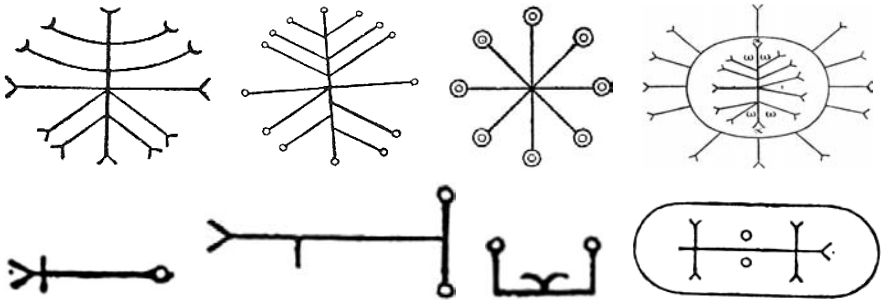
Detailed accounts of three baptisms (of water, fire, and Holy Spirit) and a further "mystery to remove the evil of the archons" are preserved in *2 Jeu*, each of which involves two sealings: the first after an offering and preparation of the participants but before the prayer, and the second presented after the completion of the baptism or mystery and the ritual meal. Those used in the middle of the rite are given a "true name," reminiscent of those of the seals used in ascent, and also an "interpretation," which takes the form of another word or name. It is possible that the use of two names is related to a Hebrew formula that presented a secret name and an expressible name of certain entities, which became garbled in translation into Greek.[43] That this seal is presented prior to the prayer may suggest that this was used as a symbol of knowledge and worthiness to the entities to be invoked, similar to the aeon and treasury seals. The first seals consist of circles of branches similar to the star emblems used so frequently in the ascent seals—and the seal of the third baptism features the eight-branch star itself.[44] The first two may have solar and lunar connections,

42 E.A.W. Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (1895; reprint: New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1967), ci.

43 G. Scholem, "Über eine Formel," 175–176.

44 M. Rognstad sees in the first three of these diagrams depictions of the Tree of Life, the fourteen aeons, and Venus or Ishtar ("Gnostiske initiasjonritualer: En studie av initiasjonsritualene i 2. Jeubok i Codex Brucianus." [Masters thesis: University of Bergen, 2006], 48–53). However, the evidence is not entirely convincing, given the lack of any indication of the group's use of Genesis mythology (beyond an Enochic reference in *3Ps*), the

FIGURE 3.9 *Baptism seals. Top row—pre-ritual; bottom row—post-ritual*



Water *Fire* *Holy Spirit* *Mystery to Remove Evil of Archons*

given their twelve and fourteen branches respectively, representative of the stations of the zodiac the sun progresses through and the days of the waxing period of the moon. Although this is speculative, the group's affinity for light and their high regard of the two luminaries throughout the texts makes this a plausible path for further investigation.

The second seals are not associated with names, but their use is somewhat more explicit: they are sealed on the foreheads of the disciples.[45] These seals are smaller and simpler, perhaps making them easier for reproduction on the forehead. It may have used oil, as in more typical Christian anointing, or indeed in Egyptian burial preparation. These were rituals to remove evil and become reborn, giving one the right for post-mortem ascent to the highest regions of the divine world. It is interesting to note that the second seal for the baptism of the Holy Spirit resembles the hieroglyph for *ka*, or spiritual essence: 𓂓 . The materials used for the incense offerings in these rituals also resemble recipes for *kyphi*, the incense used in Egyptian temples.[46] It is possible that Egyptian antecedents should be sought for the other seals in this category, as with the ascent seals above, although the same cautionary notes apply.

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fact that when the aeons are referred to, it is always as twelve or thirteen in number, and that there is no clue of a high divine role for Venus within the wider Jeuian corpus. The sun and moon as luminaries play a much stronger role with souls and the restoration of light.

45 The second seal of the final ritual shares the characteristics of the first seals, with two names and no explicit sealing placement.

46 See L. Manniche, *Sacred Luxuries: Fragrance, Aromatherapy, and Cosmetics in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 47–59.

The final seal in the mystery to remove the evil of the archons causes the disciples to become immortal, and allows them to follow Jesus on the ascent thereafter (*2 Jeu* B30(68),3–6). Then the instructions are given on how to pass through the aeons. The purification imparted by these rituals—epitomized by the final sealings—grants the participant immortality and is the first step toward the right to take a place in the kingdom of light.

3 Conclusions

Diagrams were a vital aspect of religious learning and practice to the authors of the two *Books of Jeu*. While certain symbols they contain are prevalent in the ancient world, their use here is unique among surviving texts. Although these texts do not present a myth of the origin of the cosmos recognizable from a Biblical tradition, the gradual unfolding of the treasuries with all of their inhabitants as presented in the initial types and treasury maps—by inspiration of the highest god and the actions of the true god—certainly seems to suggest a theory of creation. They represent this unfolding through symbolic images and maps. Origins of man and earth are absent, perhaps due to the nature of the tractates. Here the population, nature and navigation of the divine realms are of utmost importance.

Besides being informative of the celestial structure, the texts serve as a ritual handbook, outlining the rituals and knowledge required for salvation of the soul and ascent through the cosmos. The seals, including the names and numbers meant to accompany them, were clearly intended to be studied and memorized. The baptismal rituals provided the initial preparations for a soul's eventual ascent, cleansing it of sin and sealing it to keep evil away and identify it as pure. Sealing allows the ritual to begin, and sealing ends the ritual with a permanent purity. Regardless of whether the procedure is purely a post-mortem one or whether a meditative or ecstatic ascent occurred first in life, seals provide protection for ascent, and with their names present proof of knowledge and the power to continue on the journey.

Thus, for the group utilizing these texts, diagrams are associated with notions of universal creation, divine rulers, ascent of the individual soul, and rituals of purification—essentially every aspect of divine comprehension and practice. Knowledge of all of these is considered requisite to attain ultimate peace and glory in the world beyond. Even in the later *Pistis Sophia* texts, when the cosmological structure has apparently changed and language surrounding the highest realms has dramatically altered, hints are given that this knowledge of individual seals and diagrams is still considered necessary for the true adept.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that these later, more introductory texts, which deal considerably with punishments, worldly conduct and protocol, and exoteric exegesis do not present this most sacred and secret of knowledge. However, its existence and importance remains, as the authors exhort the readers to find these mysteries in the "Books of Jeu." From beginning to end, this knowledge remains an essential part of the soteriological beliefs and practices of the Jeuian system as a whole.

CHAPTER 4

4 Pistis Sophia (a)

1 Introduction to the Text

The division of the *Pistis Sophia* texts is an unsettled issue. Titles in the manuscript divide it into at least four books, and H.C. Puech observes that "it is today almost unanimously agreed that the four sections of the manuscript must be divided into two distinct groups."[1] That it consists of four sections or texts is thus not widely questioned in scholarship; the two groups acknowledged are *1–3PS* and *4PS* in Schmidt. G.R.S. Mead, however, has posited as many as six books, although he embraces the fourfold division and views parts of *3* and *4PS* as subdivisions of their larger wholes.[2] F. Legge does acknowledge the divisions used here, although he regards them as being composed in reverse chronological order to the widely accepted view.[3] For the present argument, at least five texts are clearly distinguishable. Schmidt's fourth book has a lacuna of eight pages, and the contents, themes, and even assumed cosmologies differ dramatically before and after the gap, suggesting they are parts of separate works. Here they shall be termed *4PS*a and *4PS*b.

*4PS*a, which consists of chapters 136–143, deals primarily with cosmological and astrological speculation and ritual development. It opens with Jesus performing before an altar a ritual prayer that apparently allows him and the disciples to witness some of the lower cosmological regions, the roles of which Jesus explains. The bulk of the book presents a myth of the fallen archons of the aeons being imprisoned by Jeu within the zodiacal sphere; introduces and outlines the realms of the wicked Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) with descriptions of its rulers, along with the sins and punishments each ruler inflicts on humanity; and describes the positions of the planets when the sinners tormented by each ruler of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) will be released. The remainder of the text has Jesus interpret the elements of his incarnation and their role in the world, and administer the

1 H.C. Puech, "The Pistis Sophia," 362; in *New Testament Apocrypha, Volume 1*, W. Schneemelcher, ed., R. McL. Wilson, trans. (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1991), 361–369.

2 G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia: The Gnostic Tradition of Mary Magdalene, Jesus, and His Disciples* (1921; reprint: Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005), xxiii–xxv.

3 F. Legge, "Introduction," *Pistis Sophia*, G. Horner, ed. and trans. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1924), vii–xlviii.

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first baptism—the baptism of the first offering—which is quite similar to those described in *2 Jeu*. It is much simpler than the latter, but their common root is clear; indeed, the baptisms of fire, Holy Spirit, and the spiritual inunction from *2 Jeu* are named, but not presented (*4PS*a 143[372]). It is possible they were recorded where the lacuna now exists; however, given the nature of the text, it is more likely that only the lowest rite was considered appropriate for inclusion, and the others required further preparation and instruction. The text serves as a preparatory tool for someone about to undergo the first baptism; accordingly it gives more background mythology and moral instruction. It presents a guide to the punishment realms, here limited to the way of the Midst (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ); a treatise on speculative astrology in a Jeuian theological context; and an initiatory ritual guide—this time with simplified ritual instructions and presenting only the first or lowest of the baptisms.

2 Cosmology

2.1 *Treasury of Light*

In *4PS*a the Treasury of Light receives little direct attention, although it is the highest realm of existence. The (mystery) name of the Father of the Treasury of Light is said to be a word of power in the prayers near the beginning of the text (*4PS*a 136[354]), and plays a key role in the baptismal rite detailed later on (*4PS*a 142[370]). Furthermore, Jesus gives a list of places for which he will give the disciples the mysteries to traverse, beginning with the twelve aeons; the Treasury of Light is at the pinnacle of this list. Immediately after his statement that he will give them the mystery of the Treasury of Light, Jesus states, "I will give to you all mysteries and all knowledge, so that you may be called: 'Sons of the pleroma, complete in all knowledge and all mysteries'" (*4PS*a 138[359]). Thus, the Treasury is the height of all mysteries and the ultimate destination of the believer.

There is some other discussion of the Treasury in *4PS*a in the context of light production and purification: the archons and gods and powers are said to have come into existence through the *matter* of the light of the Treasury (ⲑⲩⲗⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲡⲉⲑⲛⲥⲁⲩⲣⲟⲥ), and light purified in the archons is retrieved and brought back into the Treasury (*4PS*a 139[360–361]).[4] Then, in describing what he brought into the world, Jesus says that he took water and fire from the

4 Note that matter as dregs appears to be a natural product of the light realm, and not the result of a divine fall as per certain other Gnostic myths.

Treasury (*4PS*a 141[368]). This suggests that matter and the upper light world are not viewed as being completely separate or incompatible—even if matter is only a byproduct, it still has some ties to the Treasury.

Despite not being the focal point of this text, the Treasury of Light is still the pinnacle of the cosmological structure, with Jesus' spiritual Father being its source. That Father, the same Father who receives the baptismal prayers in the *Books of Jeu*, has the name of power that gives prayers greater potency. Jeu works primarily in the visible cosmos that he organizes and orders; however, he resides in the place of the right, which is here still a part of or another name for the regions of the Treasury.

2.2 *Place of the Right*

Jesus describes the right to the disciples as "our place" (*4PS*a 138[358])—a description that makes much more sense if the place of the right is associated directly with the Treasury that the rest of the document presents as the ultimate destination of purified light and souls. This description comes in a list of regions almost identical to the outline presented in *2 Jeu* (B18(56),18–26). For each region, he promises the disciples its mystery and the manner of calling upon the beings that dwell in it. Here, mention of the Treasury of Light does follow the place of the right—however, it does *not* stipulate they are separate regions. Rather, after the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), Jesus uses a different phrase, saying that he will give the disciples the *baptism* of those of the right, "our place," before returning to the language of giving them the mystery of the Treasury. This suggests that the place of the right is so closely associated with the Treasury as to be a part of it. The baptism of those of the right is simply a requirement before entry to the Treasury—"those of the right" being those who dwell there.

Jeu is also said to come from the right (*4PS*a 136[355], 139[361]). While in *1 Jeu* Jeu is called the true god, and in *2 Jeu* the true god and Jeu have been conflated into separate figures while maintaining the same functions, here the title "true god" falls out of use entirely. Jeu maintains his role as cosmic organizer, specifically of the material aeons; he binds the rebellious archons of Sabaoth the Adamas in a "Heimarmene-sphere," and he moves the good, believing archons of Jabraoth "to a purified air in the presence of the light of the sun, between the places of those of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) and between the places of the invisible god" (*4PS*a 136[355–356]). The Heimarmene-sphere here is the zodiac, the sphere of fixed stars, thus binding the sinning aeons within the material realm; in contrast the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is the border of the light realm, the place where the judge of souls resides—not quite a part of the light realm, but also beyond the reach of the material aeons. In addition to imprisoning and organizing the rebellious archons, he also assigns powers to the five planets,

and sets their courses in the sphere. Jeu is further described as "the provider of all the archons and the gods and the powers which have come into existence in the matter of the light of the Treasury" (*4PS*a 139[360]). Thus he exerts power over the material regions and entities, but remains in and derives power from the Treasury of Light.

Jeu is also called the Father of Jesus' Father (*4PS*a 136[355]; 139[359]; 139[360]), a potentially confusing designation given Jesus' origin from the unapproachable or Ineffable One. The key to this title is hinted at in *3PS* and clarified in *2PS*: the Great Sabaoth the Good is the one Jesus has called his Father—referring to the "father" of the soul or power of his earthly incarnation; Jeu, in turn, is the father of this Great Sabaoth. Jesus then has dual fathers: the unapproachable god or ineffable one as his true or spiritual father, and the Great Sabaoth as the father of his earthly soul. The Great Sabaoth the Good also dwells in the place of the right or the Treasury, looking forth from the height of those of the right and participating in freeing souls from one of the realms of the evil archons, as does Jeu (*4PS*a 139[361]).[5]

Another important figure dwells in the place of the right: Zorokothora Melchisedek is described together with Jeu, as the text says, "these *two* alone are the great lights" (*4PS*a 139[360], emphasis mine). They act together when the time of their rank comes: they go down to remove the purified light of the archons, and when they cease this, together they "withdraw to the places of the Treasury of the Light" (*4PS*a 139[360]). Zorokothora Melchisedek "bears the lights and takes them into the gate of those of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), and takes them to the Treasury of the Light" while Jeu withdraws to the places of those of the right (*4PS*a 139[360–361])—supporting the proposal that there is no intervening place between the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and the Treasury, and that the Treasury and the place of the right are identical. As seen in the previous texts, there are multiple regions within the Treasury, and the two figures here each simply return to their own posts within it. Zorokothora Melchisedek primarily transports light purified from the archons and brings it into the Treasury of the Light; however, he also participates in the process of releasing tormented souls from the archontic realms, as does Jeu (*4PS*a 140[362–364]). In this way he is placed almost equal to Jeu, participating in the maintenance of the archons, but acting more as a messenger and porter.[6]

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5 In this I disagree with MacDermot's translation of "ⲁⲩⲱ ϣⲁϥⲥⲱⲟⲩⲧ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲛ ⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ ϩⲓⲛ ⲛⲁⲟⲩⲛⲁⲙ" that he "looks forth from the height *upon* those of the right," (emphasis mine). The sense is that the right is in the height.

6 Although Melchisedek is a figure known in Jewish, Christian, and certain Gnostic groups,

2.3 *The* ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ

In *4PS*a, the three triple-powered gods are no longer the inhabitants of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, but have been moved to the thirteenth aeon, where they remain throughout the rest of the texts. The archons of the six aeons of Jabraoth have taken their place as the repentant archons that believed in the mysteries of the light. They are rewarded by being moved from their place in the aeons to "a purified air in the presence of the light of the sun, between the places of those of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and between the places of the invisible god" (*4PS*a 136[355–356]).[7] The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ here is again the next major realm after the thirteenth aeon, and is related to beings that have believed in the mysteries. Jabraoth's placement *between* the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and the thirteenth aeon suggests that the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ itself was moving away from a purgatorial or waiting-realm before entry to the higher realms into its more accepted role from the later texts as a place of judgment—the place of the Virgin of the Light, the judge of souls. The Virgin of the Light is not explicitly referenced in this text, but as will be seen later,[8] the "light of the sun" in the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ suggests her presence, and fits with the overall role and nature of the realm as described.

The main figure associated with the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, however, is the Little Sabaoth the Good. Five great archons, representing the planets, are set over the archons bound in the zodiac-sphere. To each of these great archons, Jeu binds a power from a being of the thirteenth aeon. When only Zeus/Jupiter is left, he "noticed that they needed a rudder in order to guide the world with the aeons of the sphere so that it might not be destroyed by their wickedness. He went into the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), he drew a power out of the Little Sabaoth the Good, he of the Midst, he bound it to Zeus because he is good, so that he should guide them with his goodness" (*4PS*a 137[356–357]). Later references are made to "the Little Sabaoth, the Good, who is called Zeus in the world" (*4PS*a 139–140[361–366]), even further reducing the distinction between the Little Sabaoth and Zeus. It is important that his power is associated with Zeus—the benefic planet Jupiter and its movements through the heavenly sphere. Although four of the five

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his role as presented in these texts has no direct parallels in other known traditions. See F.L. Horton, Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 166.

7 It should be noted that the archons of Jabraoth are also said to be placed "in a place of pure air" in *BC Frag 1* A4(38),19–22. This fragment shows close ties with certain aspects of the *Pistis Sophia* (see Section 1.3.1). The story of Jabraoth with be discussed further in Ch. 8.

8 See Chs. 5 and 7.

planets operate with powers from the thirteenth aeon, the region of the left, Zeus/Jupiter with the Little Sabaoth's power rules them all with goodness. It is when the Little Sabaoth/Zeus and Aphrodite (or Venus) take up positions in opposite signs of the zodiac that sinful souls are released from the clutches of the evil great archons (*4PS*a 139–140[361–364, 366], see Section 4.3.2 below). Partially because of his motions as or with Zeus through the celestial sphere, evil is gradually destroyed, and human souls are given another chance in the world.

Besides its association with the Little Sabaoth, there are two other main references to this region. The first is to the "mystery of the baptism of those of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ" (*4PS*a 138[358]) in a list of the mysteries that the disciples will receive, following the mysteries of the twelve aeons of the archons and the thirteenth aeon, and before that of the Treasury. It is the first mention of a baptism—the aeons have only nondescript mysteries. This suggests that receipt of this baptism/mystery is the first step out of the evil of the aeons, to be followed by the baptism of those of the right, which gives entry into the Treasury. The other occurrence is as an intermediate realm through which Zorokothora Melchisedek bears the purified light of the archons on his way from the aeons to the Treasury (*4PS*a 139[360–361]).

Thus we see that in *4PS*a, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ functions as a buffer between the wicked aeons/place of the left and the good Treasury/place of the right. Being just above the waiting place for those archons that have believed in the mysteries of the light, it likely houses the judge of souls, the Virgin of the Light, as well as the Little Sabaoth the Good, who plays a role in freeing souls from punishments. In some ways it seems to have been upgraded from its previous role in *2 Jeu*, where its main function was as a waiting place before entry to the Treasury.

2.4 *The Thirteenth Aeon*

The thirteenth aeon is rarely referenced directly in *4PS*a, but its inhabitants appear with some frequency. The invisible god, the Barbelo, and the triple-powered gods all play some role over the course of the text. Most notable is the association of powers from this realm with the planets—while Zeus rules them with the power of the Little Sabaoth of the Midst, the remainder have powers from the "great invisible one" (Cronos/Saturn); the triple-powered god, ⲓⲫⲁⲛⲧⲁⲭⲟⲩⲛⲭⲁⲓⲛⲭⲟⲩⲭⲉⲱⲭ (Ares/Mars); another of the triple-powered gods, ⲭⲁⲓⲛⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ (or ⲃⲁⲓⲛⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ, a name known from Greek magic; Hermes/Mercury); and Pistis Sophia, daughter of the Barbelo (Aphrodite/Venus) (*4PS*a 137[356]).

It is interesting to observe that Pistis Sophia, the heroine in the later myth dominating *1/2PS*, is associated with Aphrodite, the benefic planet that works in conjunction with Zeus to bring about positive results for human souls. Of

the other entities normally associated with the thirteenth aeon, none of the other 23 invisible ones/emanations of the great invisible god/forefather are mentioned, one is associated with the neutral planet Hermes, and two are tied to the malefic planets. From this, the only being with relatively positive associations in the material thirteenth aeon appears to be Pistis Sophia, despite a lack of evidence that the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and restoration had been incorporated into Jeuian teachings at this point.[9]

Elsewhere, Jesus in his incarnation receives wine and blood from the place of the Barbelo (*4PS*a 141[368]), which are necessary elements to purify the sins of humanity, and which signify the body of mankind through him. However, when the "name which is within all names" and which is superior to all mysteries is said to "the paralemptai [receivers] of the wicked judgments and their powers, and all their powers and the Barbelo also, and the invisible god and the three triple-powered gods … they will all fall upon one another and be dissolved and destroyed" (*4PS*a 143[373]). The whole range of beings in the thirteenth aeon, neutral, evil, or involved in Jesus' incarnation, are destroyed through the highest mysteries.

The only direct reference to the realm of the thirteenth aeon itself comes in the list of realms for which the disciples will receive mysteries (*4PS*a 138[358]). It is located before the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, to which the first of the baptisms allows entry; thus it is outside the places where even the lowest of true initiates would remain. While it serves a purpose, it is a place destined for ultimate destruction.

2.5 *The Twelve Aeons/Heimarmene/Sphere*

Although some previous scholars have considered these as three separate regions,[10] they are closely connected, to the point where a discussion of one requires reference to the others. While in *2 Jeu* the twelve aeons have a mixed nature, with five negative and seven neutral stages possibly representing the sublunar and planetary realms, in *4PS*a these elements are separated in a much clearer manner: the twelve aeons exist independently; the five evil sublunar realms are represented in the five regions of the archons of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ;[11] and the seven planets (notably the five planets, with the two luminaries in their own category) are enumerated separately with their powers for both good and evil noted. Here the myth of Sabaoth and Jabraoth is laid forth: each ruled six of the twelve aeons, and based on their actions, the followers of each were moved to

9 For more on the Pistis Sophia myth, see Ch. 8.

10 See Appendix 1.

11 Note that its role is slightly more complicated than this; see Section 4.2.6 below.

different locations to receive their just deserts (*4Ps*a 136[355–356]).[12] Jabraoth embraced the mysteries of light and was moved up and out of the place of the left, while Sabaoth persisted in his wicked mysteries and was imprisoned in the sphere of fate.

This passage gives specificity to Sabaoth the Adamas' wickedness: he and his archons "continued to be concerned with sexual intercourse, begetting archons and archangels and angels and ministers and decans" (*4Ps*a 136[355]). This is in keeping with earlier interpretations of his nature, given his association with those human beings who participate in sexual rituals mentioned in *2 Jeu*. The various begotten beings likely represent stars and other celestial bodies, epitomizing the material realm in which these entities and their sensuality hold sway.

As punishment, Jeu binds him and his evil archons within the "Heimarmene-sphere" (*4Ps*a 136[355]), or simply the "sphere" (*4Ps*a 139[359]), which is ruled by the planetary beings.[13] Composing the sphere are the twelve aeons of the zodiac, given with descriptions of their traditional Greco-Roman forms—the ram, the balance, the crab, etc. The planets move through these aeons over the way of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, which is described as existing in airy places "beneath the sphere" (*4Ps*a 139[359]). This suggests that the sphere that imprisons Sabaoth and his followers is the zodiac, and by virtue of being twelve signs in number is likely still to be thought of as the "twelve aeons." The way of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, or the five evil sublunar realms, are affected by the planets moving through the twelve aeons of the zodiac. It is the beings of the way of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ that incite men to sin and then punish them—the planets ruling over the sphere/zodiac, in addition to keeping the evil Sabaoth the Adamas in line, can have the positive effect of releasing souls from their torments and giving them another chance to live a righteous life in the world.

2.6 *The* ⲙⲛⲧⲉ

The ⲙⲛⲧⲉ here has something of a dual nature. As it was viewed as the realm of the planets in *1 Jeu*, it maintains the commonly held astrological view of the

12 Compare to C. Schmidt, who suggests this story describes the *origin* of the archontic world (*Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk des dritten Jahrhunderts aus dem Koptischen übersetzt* [1925; reprinted Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2010], 28). However, both the aeons and the realms of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ already exist, and here they are simply reorganized, with glimpses of both their new and original populations offered.

13 There are apparently two separate accounts of the imprisonment of Sabaoth the Adamas and his wicked archons (*4Ps*a 136[355–356]; 139[359]), with some of the language and events repeated.

power of the planets to attribute personality traits and faults; at the same time, it is located beneath the sphere of stars, ruled by a set of planetary beings, and divided into five sections, suggesting a role as the set of evil sublunar realms found in *2 Jeu*.[14] Thus two conflicting versions of planetary lore are found here: the Greek interpretation of the five planets and their natures, moving through the zodiac and triggering actions in the divine and celestial spheres; and the five planets of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ being shifted to rulership of the five sublunar realms. These five rulers are named, and each has dominion over a different type of sin—just as the planets were each thought to control different personality traits. In this case it serves a further dual role as cause of human sin and realm of punishment for those selfsame sins. Each of the places within is described in terms of smoke, fire, and perishing.

Interestingly, one of the fragments of the Bruce Codex lists the same names of the great archons of the way of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ found in *4Ps*a. In that fragment, the final archon—Jacthanabas—is described as "the successor (ⲇⲓⲁⲧⲟⲭⲟⲥ) of the archon of the outer darkness."[15] This suggests a connection between the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ and the outer darkness in that work. This connection is possible within *4Ps*a as well, as the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ and the outer darkness are the only places of punishment referred to in that text. This fragment also supports the possibility that the five lower aeons of *2 Jeu* are later transformed into the ways of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ: discussing the mechanics of the soul's movement through these regions, in both cases, the soul presents the beings therein with a mystery in the form of specific power words which causes fear in them.

2.7 *The Outer Darkness*

In those texts where it appears, this region serves as the ultimate place of severe punishment and annihilation—although its placement and the regulations of entry (and exit) vary. It first emerges in a single instance in *4Ps*a, in a description of what happens when one recites the name that is superior to all names after death:

> … When he says it to the demons and the receivers of the outer darkness, with their archons and their powers (*exousiai*) and their powers (*dunameis*), they will all be destroyed and their flame will burn … And when that name is said to the *paralemptai* of the wicked judgments and

14 They are also described in *4Ps*a as being in "airy places" beneath the sphere, a description also used to describe the sublunar realm in Hellenistic cosmology.

15 *BC Frag 2* E1(88),19–20. E. Crégheur translates it as "servant of the archon of the outer darkness." The general sense is the same.

> their powers (*exousiai*), and all their powers and the Barbelo also, and the invisible god and the three triple-powered gods … they will fall upon one another and be dissolved and destroyed.
>
> *4PS*a 143[373]

After the very detailed explanation of the division in the aeons, the imprisonment of the wicked archons, and the ways and means of the archons of the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ, this sudden, brief reference to the outer darkness is somewhat jolting. It is especially intriguing that the other entities listed as doomed to destruction with the recitation of this name do not have their regions specified—the paralemptai/receivers of the wicked judgments are most likely the archons of the aeons, and the Barbelo, the invisible god, and the three triple-powered gods all belong to the thirteenth aeon. In the cosmogonic layout of *4PS*a, this leaves one lower region as established earlier in the text: the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ. It would be odd to destroy all of the surrounding areas, but to leave the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ standing. Given the potential connection between the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ and the outer darkness found in the Bruce Codex fragment, it is possible that at this stage these two regions are one and the same. In this way everything beyond the border of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ (with the potential exception of the archons who believed with Jabraoth, which were moved to a space between the thirteenth aeon and the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) is destroyed by the power of the most superior name.

2.8 4PS*a*—*Cosmology Summary*

Here the beginnings of preoccupation with sin, judgment and punishment start to show. From the initial story of Sabaoth and Jabraoth being placed in different regions based on their actions, the universe is now full of pitfalls, and sins are attributed to the influence of evil beings who dwell in unsavory places, waiting to pounce upon the soul at death and torment it.

The Treasury of Light/place of the right remains the pinnacle of existence; indeed, much of the cosmology reflects that of *2 Jeu*: the twelve aeons, the thirteenth aeon, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, and the Treasury of Light. Now, however, the twelve aeons explicitly take on the role of the zodiac, and the sublunar region of the way of the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ must also be surpassed, overcoming the five great archons' efforts to entice one to sin. For one trapped in these punishments, the motion of the planets moving about the aeons/zodiac above can have beneficial results. The planets themselves take on their Greek names, and are accorded the same basic natures they have in Hellenistic astrology—Jupiter and Venus are benefic, Saturn and Mars malefic, and Mercury neutral.

Finally, in this text the concept of the populations of certain regions being destroyed upon the performance of certain mysteries comes forth. Those slated

for destruction are the receivers of the "outer darkness" (possibly the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ), those of the "wicked judgments" (likely the twelve aeons), and the powers of the Barbelo, the invisible god, and the three triple-powered gods (all of whom are residents of the thirteenth aeon). Thus all regions below the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, that dividing region between the upper and lower worlds, are eventually eliminated.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Egyptian Thought*

3.1.1 Ouroboros

The Egyptian ties in the *Pistis Sophia* are of a different nature than those in the *Books of Jeu*, but are nonetheless prevalent. The description of the sun and the moon near the beginning of *4PS*a shows traces within its amalgam of imagery. The disc of the sun is described as "a great dragon whose tail was in its mouth, and it carried seven powers of the left" (*4PS*a 136[354]). The *ouroboros*—a dragon or snake with its tail in its mouth—bearing the seven planetary powers as the disc of the sun could be connected with the figure of Mehen—the coiled snake or *ouroboros* that was said to surround the world, protecting it from chaos, and defending Ra and his solar bark.[16] Its positive nature is bolstered here by its juxtaposition with the lunar boat that collects the light of the archons.[17]

3.1.2 Decans

After the possible but unspecified implication of the decanal star system in *2 Jeu*, the term "decan" (ⲇⲉⲕⲁⲛⲟⲥ) appears in four of the five *PS* texts.[18] In *4PS*a it is used once, as one of the variety of entities that the sexually sinning archons of Sabaoth begot: archons, archangels, angels, ministers, and decans (*4PS*a 136[355]). Jeu then binds all of these beings in the Heimarmene-sphere,

16 J.H. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 238; A. Schweizer, *The Sungod's Journey Through the Netherworld: Reading the Ancient Egyptian Amduat*, E. Hornung, trans. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 218.

17 However, the snake surrounding the world was not an unequivocally positive image in Egypt; the more negative aspects will be explored further in Ch. 6.

18 Excepting the fragmentary *4PS*b. Although the term does appear in the Bruce Codex in *BC Frag 1*, this fragment shows more ties of language and themes overall with the later *Pistis Sophia* texts, and is unlikely to be directly part of the *Books of Jeu* (see Section 1.3.1).

suggesting that they are all forms of stars found within the sphere of fixed stars. This would allow for the Egyptian interpretation of the decans as starry gods tied into the workings of fate.

3.1.3 Other Imagery

Accompanying the *ouroboros* bearing the planetary powers is the boat of the moon. The text states, "But the base of the moon was of the type of a boat, and a male dragon and a female dragon steered it, while two white bulls drew it. And the likeness of a child was at the back of the moon, and guided the dragons as they stole the light of the archons from them, while a cat-face was in front of it" (*4PS*a 136[354–355]). The dragons steering this boat will be discussed in the Manichaean section below, but the two white bulls that pull it may be tied to Egyptian funerary practice. After embalming, the body of the deceased was placed on a catafalque in a boat-shaped base, which in turn was on a sledge.[19] This sledge was pulled either by male friends or by oxen, and a cohort of white oxen to pull it was desirable.[20] Thus the body was transported to its final resting place. Here, the light of the archons is taken on a journey from its imprisonment in the evil beings of the left to its proper place, as the deceased went on a journey to his rightful place in the afterlife post-embalming. The child who guides the dragons of the moon may be associated with the moon-god Khonsu; alternatively, it may be representative of the child Harpocrates, who was sometimes depicted on the boat of the sun.[21] Scott-Moncrieff believes it must be a confused interpretation of the solar child Harpocrates, and takes the mistaken lunar attribution as evidence that the author was not well-versed in Egyptian religion and imagery. It might also be noted that the adult version of Harpocrates, Horus, *is* associated with the moon. As for the lunar Khonsu, he is usually depicted with the sidelock of hair that symbolized childhood; he was also associated with boats[22] and the movement of the moon in its orbit.[23]

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19 J.H. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 187.

20 See 18th Dynasty stela in J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (D. Lorton, trans., London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 301.

21 L. Kákosy, "Gnosis und ägyptische Religion," 245, in *Le origini dello gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 aprile 1966*, U. Bianchi, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 238–247; P.D. Scott-Moncrieff, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 179.

22 M.A. Murray, *Egyptian Temples* (1931; reprint: Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 96–99.

23 D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 482.

Thus, the possibility that he is the one intended here cannot be completely ruled out. The cat-face at the front of the vessel is likely related to Bast, the cat and sun goddess who was also considered a moon goddess in the later period after Greek influence. She was sometimes viewed as the moon-eye of Horus, whose eyes were tied to the two luminaries. Furthermore, both Bubastis (*4PS*a 139[361]; 140[362, 363, 364, 366]) and Typhon (*4PS*a 140[364, 365]) play roles in *4PS*a—Bubastis being the Hellenized form of Bastet, who was also associated with Isis and Aphrodite;[24] and Typhon being the Greek name for the evil god Seth.[25]

3.2 *Astrology*

Of all the extant Jeuian texts, *4PS*a has the most obvious signs of astrological influence. Firstly, there is the singular mention of the disc of the sun as "a great dragon with its tail in its mouth" who "carried seven powers of the left" (*4PS*a 136[354])—a clear reference to the seven planets moving through the ecliptic. The moon is an elaborate boat, steered by two dragons—likely a reference to the lunar nodes, as will be discussed in Section 4.3.4.1. These two descriptions are unique, however, and at odds with the rest of the cosmology of the book and indeed that of the rest of the Jeuian texts, suggesting they are an addition from an outside source.

Of greater importance for the book is the description of the division of the twelve aeons into the six that believed in the mysteries of the light, and those that persisted in sexual intercourse. This may represent the division of the zodiac signs into diurnal and nocturnal groups of six each.[26] The result of this division is the elevation of the good archons to a location between the thirteenth aeon and the good Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), just below the border between the lower regions of the left/the cosmos and the upper regions of light. The transgressing aeons, by contrast, are bound within the "sphere," with 1800 archons bound in each aeon, 360 archons placed over them, and five great archons to rule them all: Cronos, Ares, Hermes, Aphrodite and Zeus. This is most likely a depiction of the zodiacal circle and the planets ruling over it:

24 S.K. Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 51.

25 See L. Kákosy, "Gnosis und ägyptische Religion," 246; A. von Lieven, "Gnosis and Astrology: 'Book IV' of the Pistis Sophia," 228, in *Under One Sky: Astronomy and Mathematics in the Ancient Near East*, J.M. Steele and A. Imhausen, eds. (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002) 223–234.

26 See A. von Lieven, "Gnosis and Astrology," 225.

Saturn, Mars, Mercury, Venus and Jupiter rule over the 360 degrees of the circle and the 1800 individual minutes of each of its twelve divisions.[27] Here as always in these texts, the sun and moon are exempt from inclusion in the normal workings of the sphere of fate.

These planet-archons are then endowed with powers taken from various entities. Four of them receive powers from beings of the thirteenth aeon, or place of the left: Saturn and Mars, the malefic planets, take them from the invisible god and one of the two evil triple-powered gods; Mercury, the neutral planet, from (в)ⲁϊⲛϫⲱⲱⲱϫ, the neutral/good triple-powered god;[28] and Venus, one of the benefic planets, from Pistis Sophia, daughter of the Barbelo and the only acknowledged being with good intent among the 24 invisible emanations in the thirteenth aeon.

The remaining Jupiter receives a power from the Little Sabaoth the Good from the good Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), that he might be a "rudder in order to guide the world with the aeons of the sphere so that it might not be destroyed by their wickedness" (*4PS*a 137[357]). Thus the traditional division of the five planets as two benefic, two malefic, and one neutral, is preserved and blended with the cosmology of the present author, who explains their natures through their association with beings of his own mythos.

Furthermore, Zeus/Jupiter is given "two aeons as dwellings in the presence of those of Hermes" (ⲛ̄ⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲩⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁϥⲉⲣⲙⲏⲥ; *4PS*a 137[357]).[29] It becomes apparent after analyzing the following passages that these two aeon-dwellings are the signs of Pisces (♓) and Virgo (♍), the only two signs that are not involved in the destruction of the places of the archons of the way of the Midst (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ), as shown in the table below.[30] Pisces is one of the two houses of Jupiter, and Virgo one of those of Mercury—thus giving Jupiter both his own house and one in Mercury's presence. Given the importance of the oppositional aspect in the text, it is also possible that Pisces' opposition to that Mercurial house also was involved in referring to it as being "in the presence of" those of Mercury (see Table 4.1).

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27 A. von Lieven, "Gnosis and Astrology," 225.

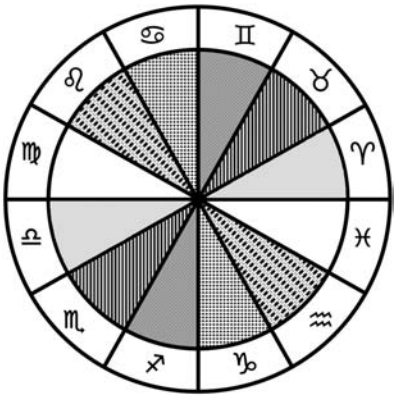
28 The triple-powered ones are discussed in Section 4.3.5.1 below.

29 V. MacDermot suggests either "in the neighborhood of" or "in the presence of" those of Hermes.

30 A. von Lieven's statement that his dwellings "can only be" his day and night houses, Pisces and Sagittarius, is tied to an over-interpretation of the importance of the traditional houses and aspects throughout the text—in this case, the square formed by the houses of Jupiter and Mercury ("Gnosis and Astrology," 226).

TABLE 4.1 *Positions of Jupiter and Venus in the destruction of the ranks of the* ⲙⲏⲧⲉ

Rank	Archon	Jupiter position	Venus position	Time soul is in rank
1	Paraplex	Aries ♈	Libra ♎	133 years, 9 months
2	Ariuth	Cancer ♋	Capricorn ♑	113 years
3	Hekate	Scorpio ♏	Taurus ♉	105 years, 6 months
4	Parhedron Typhon	Sagittarius ♐	Gemini ♊	138 years
5	Jacthanabas	Aquarius ♒	Leo ♌	150 years, 8 months



Remaining signs (likely the "dwellings" of Jupiter): **Pisces (♓); Virgo (♍)**

Total Time: 648 years, 11 months

Length of Soli-Lunar Cycle: ~**649 years**

Length of Jupiter's Synodic Period: **13 months**

13-month period fits exactly 599 times in a 648 year, 11-month timeframe

This explanation of the planets and their relationship to the zodiac is then combined with an interpretation of the five sublunar punishment realms and their connection with human foibles. Again, 360 evil archons are taken by Jeu and bound this time *beneath* the sphere, in the "way of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ)," where they are ruled by another "five great archons" (*4Ps*a 139[359]).[31] Here the term for the "Midst" has returned to the Coptic word, which in *1 Jeu* seems

31 W. Bousset relates the five archons and the 360 under their power to the Babylonian calendrical system as days (*Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* [1907; reprint: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973], 358–360), and B. Przybylski also ties them to a calendrical system, this time Egyptian ("The Role of Calendrical Data in Gnostic Literature," 56–57, in *Vigiliae*

to have referred to the paths of the planets in their relation to the divine treasuries—but now it plays a sinister role. The five great archons are pure evil and drive men to sin, later tormenting them for those selfsame sins. These archons are given names and physical descriptions, sometimes matching with descriptions of particular gods or goddesses (Hekate, Typhon), sometimes not. This clear division of the planets and the sublunar realms seems to develop and clarify the situation previously suggested in the twelve aeons of *2 Jeu*: here the planets move through the zodiac-aeons and affect through their motions the realms of the sublunar archons.

Thus the negative beings of the sublunar realms drive men to sin and then collect them for punishment, while the planets' motions through the heavens can have either positive or negative results, in keeping with a more typical Greco-Roman view of astrological workings. As Jupiter and Venus move into opposition in specific signs, the places of one of the five evil archons in the sublunar мнтє are destroyed and the souls in that domain are freed to return to the sphere. This is not an ideal situation for the human souls, as they are still trapped within the domain of fate; however, they are given reprieve from immediate torment, the possibility of resisting the temptations of the archons, and the opportunity to learn the mysteries of the author's community, the only way to fully transcend the cycle and enter the realm of light.

One of the intriguing things to note in the description of the cycle of motion and soul release is the very specific amount of time given that the soul will spend in each rank. It is not easily explained by the planetary periods; nor by the times when the key planets Jupiter and Venus move into their allotted signs. A. von Lieven has proposed calculating Jupiter's beginning point and attributing meaning to the sign of departure, but this too is unsatisfactory.[32] Although it does not give an explanation for the specific periods of time for each rank, one possible thing to consider is the total amount of time for all of the periods: adding the amounts from each rank, one arrives at a total of 648 years, 11 months. The shortest amount of time for a complete soli-lunar cycle—the time when an eclipse of the same type occurs at the same time of day and year—is approximately 649 years.[33] This would suggest that the entire

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Christianae 34 [1980], 56–70). A. von Lieven's proposal ("Gnosis and Astrology," 226–230) that the five ranks of the way of the Midst should in fact be six, and that they represent the thirty-six decans, is unconvincing.

32 "Gnosis and Astrology," 230–231. It again relies on importance of arbitrary planet-sign associations, and gives no explanation for the actual time periods given.

33 See N. DeVore, *Encyclopedia of Astrology* (Abingdon, MD: Astrology Classics Publishing, 1999), 166.

process of the planets' motions in relation to the ranks of the archons lasts as long as one full soli-lunar cycle. Furthermore, it is stated that Jupiter's circuit is established such that he "should spend thirteen months in every aeon, firmly fixed" (*4PS*a 137[357]). This might be considered puzzling as its zodiacal period, or the time it takes to fully revolve around the sun, is twelve years. However, its *synodic* period—when the Earth, the sun, and the planet in question return to the same relative positions—is thirteen months (~399 days).[34] Thus, when Jupiter has a heliacal rising—when it first becomes visible for a brief moment just before sunrise, after a period of time it has not been visible—in Leo, its next heliacal rising will be thirteen months later and will be in the following sign, Virgo.[35] Finally, Jupiter's thirteen-month synodic period fits exactly 599 times in a 648-year, 11-month soli-lunar cycle. Thus, it would appear that the author is basing his system of release for tormented souls on the visible cycles of the sun, the moon and Jupiter in relation to the celestial sphere.

3.3 *Magical Names and Words*

The debate on the definition of "magic" and its distinction from "religion" has been raging for millennia. The boundaries are quite fluid, and are largely influenced by the culture of the individual doing the defining. As A.F. Segal has noted, "no definition of magic can be universally applicable because 'magic' cannot and should not be construed as a properly scientific term. Its meaning changes as the context in which it is used changes. No single definition of magic can be absolute, since all definitions of magic are relative to the culture and sub-culture under discussion."[36] One person's magic is another's religious act. Thus, despite elements in both the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* that might be considered "magical" by some definitions, this section will be limited to a discussion of names and phrases of power, or *nomina barbara* and *voces magicae*, found predominantly in the Greek Magical Papyri and other ancient Greco-Egyptian magical ritual sources. While the roles of traditional Egyptian religion and Greco-Egyptian astrology have been discussed above, this section supplements these, covering an important subsection of ancient Greco-Egyptian esoteric culture.

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34 J. Evans, *The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 309.

35 See C. Nelson, "399-Day Mean Synodic Period of Jupiter," http://www.timeemits.com/HoH_Articles/399-Day_Mean_Synodic_Period_of_Jupiter.htm, accessed 11 June 2015.

36 A.F. Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition," 350–351, in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions: presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 349–375.

Due to the esoteric nature of these names and phrases, concrete explanations are impossible in most cases. Their use in the magical papyri is fluid and they can appear in a variety of circumstances, limiting one's understanding of the reasoning behind the selection of the particular names preserved in *4PS*a. Indeed, the fact that these recognizable magical names occur primarily in *4PS*a is remarkable in itself.[37] It suggests that the author of this text was either himself particularly interested in connecting the Jeuian system with what he felt were established names of power, or that he was writing in a cultural milieu or moment where this was considered important; and furthermore, it demonstrates that such a preoccupation was not long-lasting or widely shared within the group, and was thus allowed to be phased out. The primary purpose of this section is to further elucidate the cultural environment in which this text took form. The author of *4PS*a was writing within a culture where practical religion or magical handbooks of a type typical of Greco-Roman Egypt flourished.

3.3.1 Aberamentho

The name "Aberamentho" is used three times to refer to Jesus (*4PS*a 136[354], 139[360], 141[367]). It is spelled in two different ways (ⲁⲃⲉⲣⲁⲙⲉⲛⲑⲱ/ⲁⲃⲉⲣⲁⲙⲉⲛⲑⲱ), and in two cases corrections were inserted in the manuscript. This lack of concern for consistency is seen further in the spelling of ⲃⲁⲓ̈ⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ, which also appears as ⲭⲁⲓ̈ⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ (*4PS*a 137[356]). Although certainly there was flexibility in the spelling of certain names, the variety of spellings found within this single text suggests that the author was either ignorant of or not terribly concerned with the more traditional use of these terms. In the Greek Magical Papyri, Aberamentho is frequently used as shorthand for a much longer palindromic phrase, Αβεραμενθωουθλερθεχαναχεθρελθυοωθενεμαρεβα.[38]

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37 With a few exceptions: the name ⲃⲁⲓ̈ⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ appears once in *4PS*b, and Typhon in *BC Frag 2*. Both of these texts are highly fragmentary, preventing analysis of any further parallels. In these instances these figures both maintain the same roles they do in their *4PS*a appearances, suggesting a steady tradition in those specific instances; however, the fact that these same beings appear elsewhere in the corpus but without these more common "magical" names suggests that they were ultimately short-lived associations. The name Jao also appears in several of the Jeuian texts as well as quite frequently in the magical papyri; see below, n.51.

38 H.D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 331. Magical palindromes often had over 30 letters, sometimes 100 or more, and thus common ones were often abbreviated in formulae.

G. Massey claims the name represents Jesus as "lord of Amente/Amentho" and sets him in the position of Horus in Amente;[39] this proposal has received little scholarly attention or support. Beyond the issues of etymology, in *4PS*a—the only text in which he is called Aberamentho—Amente does not exist. In *4PS*b, where Jesus does speak with the disciples in Amente, he does not have this title. Massey's overall view of the texts blends all of the *Pistis Sophia* documents into a whole, resulting in some erroneous assumptions and confusing conclusions. F.C. Burkitt suggests that the name is derived from 'Rhadamanthus,' one of the Greek lords of the underworld. The argument is hinged on a magical spell of the Leiden Papyrus invoking Typhon Seth, one of whose 'authentic names' is Aberamenthōu, and whose other authentic names may represent some other ancient underworld deities such as the Sumerian goddess Ereshkigal.[40] Thus he suggests that the author of the spell was collecting various foreign names for the Lord of the Underworld, some of which were misspelled, and that the name 'Rhadamanthus' had been misread and transformed into Aberamentho. He states, "Rhadamanthus in Classical tradition was just and kindly, as is the Aberamentho of *Pistis Sophia*."[41]

There are a number of problems with this theory.[42] Burkitt was working with the limited information of a single spell. The Greek Magical Papyri contain several examples of the name Aberamentho, as part of the palindrome or as shorthand for it.[43] This palindrome has few obvious ties to underworld deity names. It is used to address a variety of gods for a variety of purposes. Furthermore, the spell Burkitt refers to is addressed to Typhon, who appears later in *4PS*a as a wicked archon. The spell itself is calling on Typhon to strike down a rival; hardly presenting itself as representative of a kindly underworld figure. Finally, contrary to Burkitt's theory, in this text Jesus does not, in fact, act as an underworld deity. He believes that it is Jesus as Aberamentho who arranges for souls to be sporadically released from the torments of the wicked Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ),[44] but the text contains no inkling of this. It is Jeu who arranges the planets, their motions, and their workings.

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39 G. Massey, *Ancient Egypt: The Light of the World* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 772.

40 In the *PGM*, XIVc.16–27.

41 F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis: A study of Christian thought and speculation in the Second Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 83.

42 C. Bonner also calls this theory "futile speculation" (*Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950]), 203.

43 *PGM* I.294; II.125–126; III.67, 116–117; IV.181, 3272; V.180; XXXVI.8; LIX.6; CXXVI.13.

44 F.C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, 81.

M. Tardieu proposes that the Aberamentho palindrome derives from an amalgam of terms, specifically here the Hebrew phrase for "power of waters" and the Greek version of the name of the Egyptian god Thoth, sometimes considered to be the Egyptian Hermes. It would thus ultimately refer to Thoth in a position of power over the waters. As in the Greco-Roman period Thoth was assimilated to Hermes, his powers over water were combined with Hermes' as lord over the world and elements. In the *Pistis Sophia*, "Jésus est Aberamenthō parce qu'il exerce la fonction d'Hermès-Thot comme souverain de tous les στοιχεῖα, lettres et elements."[45] He cites part of the opening of the book as evidence; thus as Jesus stands upon the water and recites the names of the Father, he personifies the deities represented by the palindrome. J. Fossum and B. Glazer support this theory, stating that by virtue of these actions "he is the Lord of the waters and the formulas controlling the cosmic powers."[46]

This theory, however, is not beyond question. It assumes that the author of this text would have been familiar with the Hebrew meaning of part of the palindrome, although there is little sign that the authors of any of the Jeuian texts had a familiarity with Hebrew. If this etymology was common knowledge, it is not made obvious through the instances in which the palindrome is used. Furthermore, the passage referring to the ocean is as follows: "ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲁⲣⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟ ⲙⲙⲛ ⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲉⲓⲭⲛ ⲡⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲱⲕⲉⲁⲛⲟⲥ" (*4PS*a 136[353]). Tardieu's interpretation does not take into account the fact that standing with Jesus "upon" the ocean are all of his disciples, and this before they have received the mysteries; it is not Jesus alone showing personal power over the waters. Although the word given, ⲉⲓⲭⲛ, is most frequently translated "upon," it can also mean "beside," and it is thus that V. MacDermot translates the passage.[47] This paints an easier picture of the scene, as in addition to Jesus and the disciples, it is stated that there is an altar with Jesus standing "ⲉⲓⲭⲛ" it and the disciples behind him. If they are standing upon an ocean, it seems likely to be a figurative one. At any rate, the name Aberamentho is not applied to him in the passage concerning the ocean, for reasons to be discussed below. Furthermore, the "cosmic powers" which Jesus controls in this immediate context—"the archons

45 M. Tardieu, "Aberamenthō," 416–417, in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions: presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 412–418.

46 J. Fossum and B. Glazer, "Seth in the Magical Texts," 92, in *Zeitschrift für Papryologie und Epigraphik* 100 (1994), 86–92.

47 See also the opening of the passage on the mystery to remove the evil of the archons, *2 Jeu* в28(66),32–33.

and the powers and the angels and the archangels, and all the powers and all things of the invisible god Agrammachamarei and the Barbelo, the leech" (*4PS*a 136[354])—are all material entities usually considered to be under Jeu's control. While Thoth ruled the stars and individual destinies, and Hermes was considered a cosmic deity and world-ruler,[48] in the Jeuian texts these are lower roles, and Jesus himself is far above them. Hermes Trismegistus himself, the combination of these figures arising in the Hermetic tradition, is essentially an enlightened human, and in any case is far from being the son or power of the highest Father that Jesus represents. It seems unlikely that the author would wish to associate Jesus with Thoth, Hermes, *or* Thoth-Hermes/Hermes Trismegistus. Rather, his power and knowledge of divine names and mysteries is far superior to any of these figures.

A. Mastrocinque also proposes a reason for the attribution of the name to Jesus, based around his larger argument for a prevalence in certain groups of serpentine solar figures and a possible etymology of the full palindrome which divides it in four parts and associates them with the four directions: "Jesus was merged with the magical Egyptianizing god known as Aberamentho because he was a serpentiform god residing in the celestial pole in the extreme North, and was also a solar deity."[49] There is, however, no suggestion that Jesus is meant to have the form of a serpent—there is no reference to such a form in the text at all, and the one description of a dragon in *4PS*a is discussed in a separate context; nor indeed is there any inkling that Jesus was considered a solar deity, in part because he was considered superior to the cosmic entities. Indeed, the dragon mentioned above is described as the disc of the sun, and it is quite independent from Jesus. If any figure is likely to be a sun god in this text it is Jeu, one of the two great lights.

The attribution of this common name of ritual power to Jesus is more likely related exclusively to his earthly body or functions in the aeonic or material realms, as opposed to his true divine nature. This is probable as in each of the three instances he is referred to with the name Aberamentho, it is in either the context of his earthly incarnation or controlling of the lower material powers. First it is before he requests the archons of the material aeons to move (*4PS*a 136[354]); next, as he explains that the Father of his Father is Jeu (*4PS*a 139[360])—thus referring to Sabaoth the Good, Jeu's offspring and the father of

48 G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 22–26.

49 A. Mastrocinque, *From Jewish Magic to Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 191.

his power or soul in his earthly form, as explained in greater detail in *1/2PS*;[50] and finally, as he discusses the elements he brought with him into the world in the form of his earthly body (*4PS*a 141[367]). The name is not used when he is associated with the Father of the Treasury of Light directly—for example, when he prays to that Father in the passage beside the ocean—nor when he promises the higher mysteries or presents the baptism to include the disciples in the Kingdom. The fact that Jesus is the only higher entity given such a common name of power here further supports the proposition that it refers only to his material or cosmic functions. While it is likely that the author viewed Aberamentho as being a particularly powerful or efficacious name, suitable for the figure of Jesus with all his earthly powers and wisdom, it is unlikely that an association with Thoth/Hermes, or any other deity, was in mind.

3.3.2 Maskelli

The next closest approximation to a positive adoption comes in the form of the being named "Zarazaz" whose gaze destroys the places of the fourth great archon of the Midst (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ). This Zarazaz is the one "whom the archons call by the name of a powerful archon of their places, Maskelli" (ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲁⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϧⲙ̅ ⲡⲣⲁⲛ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛ̅ⲭⲱⲱⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲙⲁⲥⲕⲉⲗⲗⲓ; *4PS*a 140[365]). One notices that Zarazaz himself, who must belong to the higher, spiritual place of the right, is not named Maskelli—it is in fact the name of one of the material archons, which the archons apply to Zarazaz as well. Thus the name "Maskelli" maintains a material, archontic association.[51]

The Maskelli figure in the magical papyri—as with Aberamentho, a name more typically found as part of a longer formula—also appears in a variety of capacities, but perhaps most frequently associated with "necessity" (ἀνάγκη) or "destiny."[52] That this name is associated with "a powerful archon of their [the

50 See especially *1PS* 62[123–125], *2PS* 63–64[127–129] for interpretations of the formation of Jesus' body and Sabaoth's role; see also Section 7.4.2. Sabaoth the Good is explicitly called by Jesus "He whom I have called my Father" at *2PS* 86[195], again clearly referring to his earthly form as opposed to his higher connection to the First Mystery.

51 This form of referring to a higher being by one of the lower, archontic names occurs in one other place, *2PS* 86[196], where it states that the archons of the aeons call the great hegumen of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) "the Great Jao, according to the name of a great archon of their place." This is striking as the Great Jao appears as early as *2 Jeu* where he is associated with the Treasury, and in later texts associated with the Midst, but in these cases it is not suggested that this is not his proper name. However, it should also be noted that the name Jao *does* appear in *2 Jeu* as the name of one of the archons of the eighth aeon.

52 See *PGM* III.121; VII.302, IX.10, XXXVI.342–346.

archons'] places" is quite interesting, as the archons are in this body of texts associated with fate. It is not clear why this particular entity is singled out to be called by the name of an archon, but the selection of this name in particular may be related to a combination of the popularity of the Maskelli formula in spells, and its ties to destiny.

3.3.3 Agrammachamarei

Moving down the hierarchy, the invisible god of the thirteenth aeon is once called ⲁⲅⲣⲁⲙⲙⲁⲭⲁⲙⲁⲣⲉⲓ (*4PS*a 136[354]), another name found frequently in the magical papyri with a few variant spellings. First, it should be observed that this name appears in a list of entities that Jesus commands to move out of the way, quoted above. By being associated with the invisible god of the thirteenth aeon, it is a name describing a material being, which is subject to commands from a higher rank. Ascribing the invisible god a "magical" name would have been thought to give greater power over him—a practice seen also with the planets in this text, which in addition to their usual names, "by which the men of the world call them" (*4PS*a 137[357]), are given "imperishable" names unknown from the currently preserved magical papyri, but which are nonetheless of the same ilk. G. Scholem proposes an Aramaic origin for the name Akramachamarei, from whence comes the imperative phrase, "uproot the magic spells."[53] However, there is again little sign that this linguistic origin or semantic meaning played a role in its selection for use here. Interestingly, there is a curse tablet featuring Ἀχραμαχαμαρει as "master and ruler of the heavenly firmament;"[54] this would reflect a fitting role for the invisible god in the thirteenth aeon, ruler of the height of the material realm.

3.3.4 Bainchoooch

ⲃⲁⲓⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲱⲭ appears twice, once in each *4PS*a and b. It is used to refer to the same figure both times: the neutral triple-powered one. This name is used frequently in the magical papyri, and although it can be part of a longer palindrome, it is more commonly seen in this form, which is translated to "soul of Khukh," god of darkness.[55] In *4PS*a it explains that this figure provides the power of the neutral planet Mercury (*4PS*a 137[356]). His role is given more specificity in *4PS*b: he is the only triple-powered one that interacts with human souls in

53 G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965), 97.

54 A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris, 1904), 325, II. 7–8; cited in G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 96.

55 See H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 18n.3.

a semi-positive way, escorting those souls that lived righteously but did not receive the mysteries to allow them access to the Treasury of Light, and teaching them of the creation of the world with gladness (*4PS*b 147[382]). This then appears to be another case of a name being considered particularly efficacious, and being thus associated with a figure that plays an active role with the human realm and particular souls.

3.3.5 Hekate and Typhon

Finally, both Hekate and Typhon appear as great archons of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ), tormenting the souls of sinners. Although these names apply to divine figures found outside of magical contexts as well, they are included here for their frequency of appearance amongst the magical papyri. In *4PS*a, Hekate is described as three-faced; this is in keeping with Greco-Egyptian magical tradition, which frequently depicts her as three-formed.[56] As a goddess of magic among other things, she is not automatically considered an evil being. Typhon's form, although not given a physical description in *4PS*a, is slightly elaborated in *BC Frag 2*, where he is said to have an ass's face (*BC Frag 2* E1(88),11–12). This, too, is in keeping with common Typhon imagery, the Greek name of the evil Egyptian god Seth.[57] Both figures are used frequently in the magical papyri, for a variety of purposes. As with the previously discussed names borrowed from magical tradition, there is no immediately obvious reason for these particular figures to have been imported; nor are the origins of the other three great archons of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) clear.

3.3.6 *Thernopsi* Formula

One other formula deserves a brief mention here. The "Thernopsi" formula is a series of words basically composed by rearranging the syllables ψι, νω, and θερ: ψινωθερ νωψιθερ θερνωψι. It appears at least twice in the Greek Magical Papyri, with another instance perhaps including corruptions or variant readings.[58] *Psinother* derives from the Egyptian for "son of God."[59] The formula appears

56 See *PGM* IV.2119,2608–2610,2727,2880; XXXVI.190; see also C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets*, nos. 64, 66; A. Delatte and Ph. Derchaine, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1964), 189, nos. 252, 253, 254.

57 For Typhon as the evil Seth or opponent of the sun, see for example *PGM* XII.373–374; XXXIIa.1; XXXVI.319; LVII.4; LXVIII.1; LXXVIII.7.

58 See *PGM* III.186; IV.828–829; VII.316; also H. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 339.

59 E. Amélineau, *Essai sur le Gnosticisme égyptien: Ses développements et son origine égyptienne* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1887), 320; P.D. Scott-Moncrieff, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt*, 170n.1; H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 54n.112; M.W. Meyer, ed., *The*

twice in *4PS*a, again with variant spellings, as is typical also with the names discussed above (*4PS*a 136[353], 142[370]). In both instances they appear in appeals for the Father of the Treasury of Light (as opposed to Sabaoth the Good, Jesus' earthly "father") to hear, immediately after a series of permutations of the letters of ιαω. A few other unknown magical words are common to both of these invocations, while in the first a number of other common magical words also appear. It should be clarified that these invocations do not represent a name or names of this highest Father—that name is not written down. These written lists of names of power contain those of lower entities such as Jeu and Sabaoth, suggesting that these words are meant to get the hearer's attention and act as signifiers of the speakers' wider divine knowledge.[60] Regardless of whether the etymological origin or meaning of the phrase was known, it is clear that the author felt it appropriate in an address to the highest entity of his system.

3.3.7 Summary of Magical Name Usage

This demonstrates that the author of *4PS*a in particular had both access to and interest in names and verbal formulae found primarily in practical ritual or "magical" texts of a Greco-Egyptian provenance. These elements are not found together in any one particular spell or text, but are scattered across a variety of sources, suggesting both the popularity of the terms for ritual use and the variety of materials the author of *4PS*a may potentially have utilized. Despite the proposed etymological origins of several of the above terms, there is little evidence that the author had these in mind in selecting these particular elements for incorporation. Rather, it seems that they were chosen for their perceived power. Aside from the *thernopsi* formula, which while addressed to the highest Father does not pertain to him directly, they relate to entities dwelling or acting in the material realm. This perhaps in the author's mind explained why they could be called upon in more material ritual contexts. In Jesus' case, the name Aberamentho is related purely to his material incarnation and powers, as opposed to his spiritual origin in the Treasury of Light. This maintains the division between the upper, spiritual elements and the lower, material ones in the author's system.

Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook (1987; reprint: Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999), 212. Alternatively, T. Hopfner (*Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, Vol. 1 [Leipzig: Haessel, 1921], sec. 750) proposes that the formula derives from the Egyptian for "highest god."

60 So for example at *4PS*a 136[354], after giving a list of such names, then the text simply says that Jesus "cried out again, saying the name of the Father of the Treasury of the Light."

3.4 *Interaction with Manichaeans*

3.4.1 Solar and Lunar Imagery

The image of the sun and the moon as ships, transporting the Third Messenger and the Virgin of Light and collecting light from the archons, is key in the Manichaean myth. Celestial boat imagery appears only once in all of the Jeuian texts: "But the base of the moon was of the type of a boat, and a male dragon and a female dragon steered it, while two white bulls drew it. And the likeness of a child was at the back of the moon, and guided the dragons as they stole the light of the archons from them, while a cat-face was in front of it" (*4PS*a 136[354–355]). Here then, it is only the moon which is depicted as a boat, while immediately preceding this passage the disc of the sun appears as a dragon with its tail in its mouth, carrying "the seven powers of the left"—the seven planets. The two dragons steering the boat of the moon most likely represent the lunar nodes, also considered important in the Manichaean myth: the Shabuhragan specifically states that the beings forming the firmament "attached the seven planets and suspended the two dragons (= the lunar nodes) and chained them" (*Shabuhragan* M 98–99).[61] However, in the Manichaean sources, these nodes or "Ascendants" were considered evil, sometimes serving to replace the positively-viewed sun and moon in the list of seven planets with their evil natures[62]—whereas here they are part and parcel of the lunar package, working towards the collection of the light from the archons.

This passage has been used to support Egyptian connections for the *Pistis Sophia*, and such connections have been discussed above. However, despite the solar snake imagery in ancient Egypt, as far as boat imagery goes the solar barque was far more important to the Egyptians than a lunar one—and no solar ship appears here; also neither the sun nor the moon was thought to *collect* light. This concept of light collection is vital in the Manichaean system. In this way the *4PS*a passage seems more closely tied to Manichaean imagery than Egyptian, although still the correspondences are far from exact. Furthermore, the lack of connection of the images in this passage with anything else in the *PS* texts suggests that this is an insertion from an external source—although there are several examples of apparent insertions or conflations in the following material, as well.

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61 Referenced in P.O. Skjærvø, *An Introduction to Manicheism II—Texts* (course notes, Early Iranian Civilizations 103, 2006 Fall term, available on Harvard FAS website: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iranian/Manicheism/, accessed 20 September, 2013), 29.

62 T. Pettipiece, *Pentadic Redaction in the Manichaean* Kephalaia (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 63–64.

3.4.2 Purification of Light

The purification of light within matter is an important concept in both the Manichaean and Jeuian texts. The process of purification is at times more immediate and visceral in Manichaean tradition: for example, the bodies of the elect purify the light trapped within fruits and vegetables by digesting them.[63] The initial process of making the archons give up the light they had swallowed, however, is slightly closer to what is found in the Jeuian texts, if again the latter is less graphic: a heavenly being (or beings) appears before them and causes them to unwillingly give up their purified light, then takes that light back to the treasury or kingdom of light; the remainder or dregs go into the world to be purified. As seen above, the sun and the moon work together in some capacity to bring this about: in Manichaean myth it is the Third Messenger with the Virgin of Light who appear before the archons in solar and lunar ships, causing them to ejaculate part of their light in lust.[64] *4PS*a says that Jeu and Zorokothora Melchisedek are "the great lights. Their rank is this, that they come down to the archons and they (the lights) are purified in them. And Zorokothora Melchisedek takes what is purified of the lights which have been purified in the archons, and takes them to the Treasury of the Light" (*4PS*a 139[360]). It is possible that these two were at this time associated with the sun and the moon; with Jeu's potential association with the sun in *1 Jeu* and Zorokothora as the other great light here, this cannot be wholly discounted.[65] It is not explicit, however, and in *1PS* the receivers of the sun and moon both report to Melchisedek (*1PS* 25[35]), who is of the place of the right above the cosmic spheres (*2PS* 86[194–195]). At any rate, there is no boat imagery associated with

63 See references in S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 21n.122.

64 See P.O. Skjærvø, *An Introduction to Manicheism 1*, 47. It should also be noted that the imagery of a divine being appearing before flawed lower beings and inciting them to ejaculate their illicit light-power out of lust is also found in Epiphanius' description of the Nicolaitans (*Pan* 25.2.4), where it is Barbelo who is the mother of the archons and who appears before them to collect their seed to recover her power. In that case, however, the story is apparently used to excuse wanton sexuality within the group, whereas the Manichaeans depict the lust and sexuality of the archons as the basest of things, to be avoided.

65 Alexander of Lycopolis says that the Manichaeans thought of the moon in particular as a gatherer and transporter of light from the world to the divine realm, as it waxes gathering the light, and as it wanes sending it onward (I. Gardner and S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 180–181); this would correspond to Zorokothora Melchisedek's role here.

them, nor the lustful ejaculations of the light found in the Manichaean texts; thus, while there are parallels between the systems, they are not exact copies, reflecting rather a shared cultural milieu or pattern of thought in which these systems were developing.

3.4.3 The Five Worlds of Darkness and the Way of the Midst

The five evil realms associated with the way of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) may be tied to the Manichaean idea of the five worlds of darkness. The five Manichaean worlds of darkness are each associated with a dark element: smoke, fire, wind, water, and darkness. Each is furthermore ruled by a being with a different physical and sensory description, and each rules over a different subset of people: the powers and authorities of the earth, the fire-worshippers, the idol-worshippers, the baptizers, and the soothsayers (*Keph* VI 33.5–34.5). T. Pettipiece is persuasive in his suggestion that these five sub-rulers are "a reflection of the compiler's desire to identify and attribute a particular governing spirit or authority to what he perceived as five spheres of negative influence in the world;"[66] i.e. the Sassanian kings, their Zoroastrian clergy, traditional cults, Christians and other baptizing groups, and elements of popular religion such as oracles and soothsaying. Thus the fivefold division of the evil domains would reflect actual opposition or perceived negative influences facing the group in the world. While the *Kephalaia* warns to "not interact with them, so that you might escape their bond and their punishment forever" (*Keph* VI 34.10–12), it does not give any details as to the nature or length of the punishments.

The five great archons of the way of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) also each have their own physical description, albeit less systematically than the Manichaean versions. Here, each archon rules over people who commit certain sins, such as anger/slander, murder, swearing false oaths, fornication/adultery, or impeding justice and neglecting the needy. This description of the evil realm and its rulers presents an author or group more concerned with ethical behavior in its members than with denouncing specific social or cultural groups and trends in the world. Furthermore, these realms are specifically associated with *punishments*—although the archons drive men to behave in these ways, souls that give in to their prodding and engage in these sinful behaviors in the world are taken to be punished by these same beings. These punishments are described in more detail than their Manichaean counterparts, as the soul is consumed with dark smoke and wicked fire until the planets align for it to be allowed back into the world. While the Manichaean author was concerned with

66 *Pentadic Redaction*, 61.

immediate apostasy and social pressures, the author or compiler of the *Pistis Sophia* was focused on the more abstract temptations in the world, the ascetic and ethical principles of the group, and the journey of the soul after this life.

3.4.4 Reverence of the Sun and Moon Apart from the Traditional Planets

This fivefold division of the evil realms may furthermore be in part related to the Manichaean separation of the sun and the moon from the five other, evil "planets." The demonizing of the five planets while revering the luminaries was unusual in ancient thinking, and in some instances Manichaean authors included the two ascendants or lunar nodes to make up the more typical planetary number seven.[67] The importance of the sun and moon in the Manichaean system has been discussed, as they serve to transport purified light from the dark mixture of the world back to the kingdom of light. *4PS*a, the Jeuian text most explicitly concerned with astrology, also holds the sun and moon apart, although its view of the other five planets is more in line with popular thinking at the time (Saturn/Mars being malefic, Jupiter/Venus being benefic, and Mercury being neutral) rather than presenting them all as evil. The movements of the benefic planets can have positive responses. However, although the five evil entities of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ ruling five evil realms are here not identified directly with the planets, there is the possibility that they arose out of a planetary background, as in *1 Jeu*; they also have the planet-like quality of imparting particular traits or tendencies toward particular sins in humanity. Their role in forming and subjugating humanity through sin could be seen as having influence from the Manichaean notion of the planets.

3.4.5 The Five Evil Realms and Division of the Zodiac

The division of the zodiac into five realms, each having "two" signs, is found in differing forms in the *Kephalaia* and *4PS*a. *Keph* LXIX discusses the zodiac and its divisions and relations with each of the five evil planets at some length, and while it posits two signs per world of darkness, two of them have three associated signs to make up the total of twelve. These divisions do not have an immediately obvious logic: while the divisions of four sets of three signs later in the chapter are sorted by the traditional four-element classifications, each evenly separated from the others in its group, in the divisions by the five worlds of darkness they are scattered across the board. Furthermore, each of the five planets is associated with one of these divisions, without regard to traditional ideas of planetary rulership of the signs. Its seems that there was a perceived

67 See Section 4.3.4.1.

need to connect the zodiac to the five worlds of darkness, but perhaps without great consideration of the significance for the way in which this connection was made.

The *4PS*a divisions solve the problem of assigning the twelve signs to five realms slightly more elegantly, by pairing the signs in opposition and having the two remaining as the dwelling of Zeus/Jupiter, benefic ruler of the planets. Rather than having the five divisions "belong" to each of the five realms, it is through the positioning of the benefic planets in them that they are related to and in fact serve to aid in destroying each section. In a way, the sphere of fate is thus turned into a positive force for human souls in opposition to the archontic rulership of the Midst (ⲙⲓⲧⲉ). By divorcing the planets from the five evil realms and not considering them or the zodiac as purely evil, this system allows for more flexibility and balance in tying the zodiac to the five archontic realms. Thus any Manichaean influence has been subsumed into a new and innovative system.

3.5 *Interaction with Sethians*

3.5.1 Invisible God and the Triple Powered Ones

Although in *2 Jeu* the triple-powered ones of the Sethian hierarchy have a position worthy of some merit, this honor is not shared in the rest of the Jeuian tradition. In *4PS*a they assume their more standard place alongside the great invisible one in an unspecified area above the twelve aeons and below the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ)—apparently the thirteenth aeon.[68] The great invisible one and two of the triple-powered ones provide powers for three of the five planets—Saturn and Mars, the two malefic planets; and Mercury, the neutral planet. It should be noted that these two triple-powered ones listed here have "magical" names, and are thoroughly dissociated from any concepts of Platonic reality. One of them, however, maintains a unique status: the one called (ⲃ)ⲁⲓⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ is associated with neutrality in *4PS*a 137[356], and with charge of souls who have not received the mysteries but who lived righteous lives in *4PS*b 147[382] (and although not specifically named, by inference in *3PS* 103[262]—"one of the great triple powers—these among which there is a great one").

The other triple-powered one appearing in *4PS*a has a nondescript role, negative purely by association with the planet Mars. The third triple-powered

68 The archons of Jabraoth, who have taken the triple-powered ones' places as those entities rewarded for believing in the mysteries, are moved from the twelve aeons to a purified place "between the places of those of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) and between the places of the invisible god." (*4PS*a 136[356])

one is not named or mentioned; although it is possible that this figure is Authades, the head of evil in the Pistis Sophia myth, this is far from certain given the lack of evidence that this myth was in use at an early stage.[69]

The usual close proximity of the triple-powered ones to the invisible god reflects their origin in a Sethian context, where the singular Triple-Powered One is either an aspect of or near to the Invisible Spirit. While the multiplication of one figure into three may be due to a misunderstanding on a teacher or author's part, the texts still present a deliberate skewing of the Sethian hierarchy. The invisible god and the triple-powered ones are relegated to the thirteenth aeon, and their powers tied with the celestial bodies—far from the Platonic ideals they once represented. This is another example of the Jeuian authors deliberately subordinating the Sethian mythos to their own view of cosmic powers and origins—a nod to the Sethians' influence, but a decidedly degrading interpretation.

3.5.2 Barbelo

Although in her first appearance in *2 Jeu* she appears in the twelfth aeon, in all texts thereafter she exists in the thirteenth aeon, replacing the great virgin spirit as the more typical consort of the invisible god/Spirit.[70]

The first hints at the Barbelo's larger role appear in *4PS*a. After Jesus performs a ritual over the disciples such that they have a vision of the light on high, afterward they see in him fire, water, wine and blood. Of these, the first two derive from the Treasury of Light, while the latter two are from "the place of the Barbelo." Furthermore, while the water, fire and wine exist to purify the sins of the world, the blood is "a sign concerning the body of mankind" that Jesus received (*4PS*a 141[368]). This seems to be an early version of the construction of Jesus' incarnation that appears in *1/2PS*, wherein he receives elements of spirit, power, and material body—the latter of which comes from the Barbelo (*1PS* 61[122]; *2PS* 63[128]). In both cases, the material body of the incarnation derives from the Barbelo, who dwells in the material thirteenth aeon.

She is also the mother of Pistis Sophia (*4PS*a 137[356]), who in *1/2PS* is one of the 24 invisible emanations that "the great invisible forefather with the two great triple-powered ones" emanated (*1PS* 29[43]). In *2 Jeu* as well, the 24 ema-

69 For more on the Pistis Sophia myth and its nature as a late compilation of sources, see Ch. 8.

70 The Barbelo was also sometimes referred to as a virgin, perhaps adding to the confusion and the contributing to this substitution; see *TrimProt* 38,14; *GosEg* III 42,12–13; 62,1; IV 52,4; 73,11–12; *StelesSeth* 121,21; *Zost* [36,23]; 63,6–7; 83,11; 87,10; 129,11; *Marsanes* 4,11; 8,29; 9,2; *Allogenes* 59,6–7.

nations are tied to the great invisible god alone (*2 Jeu* B45(83),21), as the triple-powered ones possess a higher status.[71] This, then, is the first suggestion of the Barbelo's role in the generation of the emanations. The confusion about her relationship with the 24 is further reflected in one of Pistis Sophia's repentances in *IPS*, as she laments that "I have become a stranger to my brothers, the invisible ones, and also to the great emanations of the Barbelo" (*IPS* 32[48]). This suggests a generative role for the Barbelo, but one distinct from the 24 invisible emanations that belong to the invisible god and his triple-powered minions alone. The reason for this later reluctance to associate the Barbelo with the 24 invisible emanations—which this author considers to be generally ignorant beings—but the desire to associate her with the Pistis Sophia who believes in the higher light, as well as her role in providing material for Jesus' earthly incarnation, can perhaps be explained through the concept of her function going back to early Sethian notions of a descending Savior.

In the Sethian descent-pattern treatises, the Barbelo, as Mother of all, is at least indirectly involved in Sophia's emanation. She is the mother of the Self-begotten, who in turn produces the aeons, including Sophia (*ApJohn* III 11,4–12,15; BG 32,5–34,7; II 7,16–8,20). J.D. Turner notes that while "Sophia becomes the cause of cosmogonic deficiency … on the transcendent level, the higher Mother (Pronoia, Protennoia, Barbelo) must now undertake the restoration of this deficiency. She accomplishes this by causing direct representations of herself to appear on the earthly, human plane."[72] The final manifestation often takes the form of a masculine figure such as Seth or Christ.[73] In the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the Savior's manifestation takes place through a body prepared "through the virgin," most likely the Barbelo (*GosEg* III 63,10–14; IV 74,24–30). This body is also "Logos-begotten," and its material nature is not clarified, perhaps in fitting with the higher nature accorded to its provider as well as its bearer. Thus, although the Invisible Spirit is in these texts the highest being, the Barbelo is both involved in Sophia's emanation as Mother and works to repair the deficiency, including the preparation of a Savior-body in some instances.

In the Jeuian texts overall, the whole of the Sethian hierarchy is demoted to the material aeons. However, in the *Pistis Sophia* a number of theological

71 Contrary to C. Schmidt, who names the Barbelo as the source of the 24 invisible emanations (*Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk*, 71).

72 J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 754.

73 J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*, 754. There are variations on this theme between texts, but the necessity of divine descent for salvation is consistent. The Nag Hammadi "descent" treatises are comprised of *ApJohn*, *TrimProt*, *Melch*, *ApocAd*, *GosEg*, *HypArch*.

and soteriological developments take place. The group adopts a version of the Sophia redemption myth, with (Pistis) Sophia remaining as the fallen and saved element; in addition, interpretation of Jesus' incarnation comes to the fore.[74] In both instances, the Barbelo retains her prior role, despite a greatly reduced prestige overall due to her new material nature. She is presented as mother of Pistis Sophia, and she provides a body for the descending Savior. This body is material, in accordance with the Barbelo's new material nature and as explanation of a material incarnation; this is in contrast with earlier versions wherein she has a higher nature and the materiality of the Savior's body is ambiguous.

Through these connections with the Savior and the lone believing emanation of the thirteenth aeon, she becomes in a way elevated above the invisible god/spirit, which in Sethian thought was the original, perfect principle, but which in Jeuian terms is only a representation of matter (*2 Jeu* B44(82)21–30; *4PS*a 143[373]; *1PS* 61[122]; *2PS* 63[128]). It is unlikely that the authors, with their low view of the Sethian divine entities overall, would have attributed such positive qualities and associations to the Barbelo without having retained it from their earlier sources. Furthermore, the fact that despite these elements, in *4PS*a she is still set to be destroyed along with the invisible god and all three triple powered gods when the superior name is recited suggests that the author still considers her nature to be material, equivalent to those other entities, and thus she is not afforded special status in the face of the divine mysteries (*4PS*a 143[373]). Her special attributes must be holdovers from an older tradition, and as the physical body needed for Jesus could not derive from the higher, non-material regions, the author saw no reason to change its source.

4 Key Concepts

While *1 Jeu* focused entirely on the Treasury of Light and ascent knowledge for the highest divine realms, and *2 Jeu* split its attention between initiation

74 The discussion of his incarnation in *4PS*a (141[367–369]) appears to rely on more esoteric materials from a combination of Matthew and John (the descent of the dove, provision of living water, wine as blood of the covenant for forgiveness of sins, the spear wound producing blood and water). The lone unique reference from Luke (12:49; "I have come to cast fire upon the earth") serves to explain the purifying fire Jesus brings, and does not necessarily signify the author's greater knowledge of the gospel. In fact, this passage is the only place in *4PS*a to show significant NT influence, and may have been taken from a separate tradition. See Section 4.4.2 below.

or baptismal rites and ascent through the lower, material realms, this final text with a ritual aspect also contains the least explicit ritual material. It deals first with mythical explanation for the organization of the universe, as well as outlining a moral code by listing wicked archons and the sins they bring about in man. After this, it gives a short visionary rite used as a vehicle for gospel interpretation, followed by a simplified version of the first baptism found in *2 Jeu*.

4.1 *Mythic Background and Moral Instruction*

The first part of the text is primarily concerned with mythological background tied to the cosmology of the regions below the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ). The cosmological aspect of the text has already been discussed above, but this first section also serves to highlight the moral precepts and lifestyle that were required of members. By explaining that certain archons were imprisoned for refusing to give up sexual intercourse (*4PS*a 136[355]), it shows that at least in some respects an ascetic lifestyle was expected for initiates. The outline of the wicked Midst (ⲙⲛⲧⲉ) and its archons also presents sins that the initiate was expected to give up or overcome, divided into categories (*4PS*a 139–140[359–366]; those in italics are shared with the list found in *2 Jeu* B19(57),2–12):

– First rank: anger, ***cursing***, ***slander***,
– Second rank: fights, murder, heart hardened in anger,
– Third rank: ***swearing false oaths***, lying, covetousness,
– Fourth rank: ***desire***, ***fornication***, ***adultery***, sexual intercourse,
– Fifth rank: partiality, wronging the righteous, accepting bribes, and neglecting the poor and needy.

This list of sins shows some shifts in focus from its predecessor in *2 Jeu*: sexual sins and falsehoods are a concern in both, but now anger and its associated actions are included, along with highlighting the necessity of righteousness and justice.[75] The list is still further developed and expanded in *4PS*b and *3PS*, which focus more on assigning different types of punishments in different regions for the various sins and less on the benefits of righteous living. Thus the early code of conduct for initiates unfolds, beginning with a set of fundamental sins to be avoided, and gradually being added to and stratified into levels of relative sinfulness.

75 The command not to love gold or silver found in *2 Jeu* may be represented in the injunctions against accepting gifts to impede justice or neglecting the poor.

4.2 *Visionary Rite—Vehicle for Gospel Interpretation*

Prior to the receipt of the first baptism, *4PS*a includes a brief ritual that changes the disciples' perception of Jesus, making them see fire, water, wine, and blood. This causes Jesus to explain these symbols, primarily as found in the gospels. The fire is associated with purification by casting fire on the earth (Luke 12:49); the water with Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman (John 4:10/14); the wine with communion (Matthew 26:27–28), and the blood with the results of the spear piercing Jesus' side (John 19:34). Chapter 141, in which this discussion appears, is dotted with numerous gospel references, which are otherwise extremely scarce in this text—and indeed, these references are more concentrated and varied than in the rest of the *Pistis Sophia* combined. This chapter is also the only place in the book with explicit references to three of the canonical gospels.[76] John in particular has minimal representation elsewhere in the extant Jeuian corpus, besides the handful of references here. Furthermore, this is the only place in these texts to place any focus on the symbols of wine and blood—although wine does appear in the baptismal instructions of both *4PS*a and *2 Jeu*, it does not appear to hold the same symbolism attributed to it in this chapter. All of this combines to suggest that this chapter may have been either a section from an outside source, or a later addition from a time that felt certain canonical gospel symbolism should be addressed.[77]

The "ritual" itself is extremely short: Jesus commands the disciples to approach him, he turns to the four corners of the world, says the "great name" over their heads, and breathes into their eyes (*4PS*a 141[367]). When they open their eyes, they see a great light, and when they look away from the light they see the fire, water, wine, and blood, prompting Jesus' explanation with reference to the gospels. It is perhaps noteworthy that the explanation of the baptism that follows this section does *not* include the participants turning to face the four directions, in contrast to the similar rites found in *2 Jeu*. The fact that this action takes place shortly before the description of the baptismal rite, in a section that shows signs of potentially having been added to an existing document, might suggest that this turning to the four corners has been moved from an

76 Mark remains without representation; Mark is also lacking in unique references in the entirety of the extant Jeuian texts. This suggests that the group was unfamiliar with or rejected this text up to the latest point for which we have evidence, thus excluding the possibility that they eventually embraced the traditional fourfold gospel.

77 For an earlier discussion on the use of the New (and Old) Testament in the *Pistis Sophia*, see A. von Harnack, *Über das gnostische Buch Pistis-Sophia* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1891), 2–49.

earlier position in association with the baptism itself. This must, however, remain speculation.

4.3 *Baptism of the First Offering—An Introduction for Beginners*

The following chapter contains instructions for the "baptism of the first offering," which begins in much the same way as the baptisms in *2 Jeu*. Indeed, following this ritual description the text states that the baptisms of fire and Holy Spirit are still to come, making it likely that this baptism of the first offering and the baptism of water are meant to be equivalent. There are many parallels between this rite and its predecessor; however, there are also several quite significant differences.

The initial setup and overall proceedings of this rite are much simpler than any of the *2 Jeu* baptisms: there is no longer a long list of incense or offering ingredients, there are no plants worn or held by the baptizands, and there are no seals. There are two pitchers of wine and bread according to the number of participants, but now there are also two cups of water in the arrangement. The disciples hold a cipher in their hands, but it is called the cipher "of the name of the Father of the Treasury of Light" rather than the cipher of the seven voices.[78] Jesus prays, calling out, "Hear me, my Father, thou father of all fatherhoods, thou infinite Light," directly paralleling the phrasing found in the *2 Jeu* rituals—however, in the *2 Jeu* version, a number of *nomina barbara* had to be recited before this formula, as an initial show of secret knowledge. The *nomina barbara* found in the *4PS*a prayer are quite different from those in the *2 Jeu* water baptism, presenting names or words of a style known from the magical papyri, such as Iao and the *thernopsi* formula. While the *2 Jeu* baptism specifies the involvement of the fifteen helpers of the seven virgins of light, here Jesus simply asks for "the forgivers of sins" to come—giving either 15 or 16 names.[79] This is close enough to suggest that while there are clear differences, the parallels are not mere coincidence.

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78 It is possible that the "seven voices" and the name of the Father of the Treasury of Light are different terms for the same thing—the number or characters of the cipher are not given in this case.

79 Partway through the list the phrase "ⲛⲁⲛⲁⲓ" appears, which can also translate as "have mercy upon me." It is unclear whether this was intended as a separate name or as an intelligible phrase and part of the prayer. While C. Schmidt and G.R.S. Mead both acknowledge the possible translation of the term, V. MacDermot glosses over it in her translation (*4PS*a 142[371]). E. Amélineau presents it as a mystery name, hyphenated with the following name (*Pistis Sophia: Ouvrage gnostique de Valentin* [1895; reprint: Milan: Archè, 1975], 195).

Jesus requests that the disciples' sins be forgiven and their iniquities wiped out; however, he goes on to add, "Forgive them these which they have committed in fornication and adultery until the present day" (*4PS*a 142[371])—highlighting sexual sins as requiring particular forgiveness, in accordance with the prominence given to the wicked archons' persistence in sexual transgressions earlier in the text (*4PS*a 136[355]; see also 140[364]). When the prayer is concluded, he requests that they receive "a sign in this offering;" the sign occurs, but it is not specified. The sign of the water baptism in *2 Jeu* involved the transformation of wine obtained from a pure source into water; however here the source of the wine is not specified, and water is already present in cups on the table, eliminating the significance of the sign described in the earlier version of the rite. Zorokothora Melchisedek is also no longer involved in the transport of baptismal signs or materials. As mentioned above, there is no seal to conclude the ritual, and here it does not even state that the disciples receive of the offering, potentially making the inclusion of bread and wine or water a relic of rites past.

Overall, this ritual is much simpler in its description than the potentially equivalent water baptism in *2 Jeu*. There are a number of possibilities to explain this simplification. First, in comparison with its predecessor, this text is much more explicit about the fact that this rite is meant to be performed for all who believe in and obey the injunctions of the group (*4PS* 141[369], 142[372]). Although *2 Jeu* does state that the mysteries should be passed on, it is always in the context of listing things that those who will receive these mysteries should *not* do or believe, as opposed to a positive command to pass them on to believers as in *4PS*a. *2 Jeu* has a much stronger sense of secrecy, and of the elite nature of these rites. Compare Jesus' statements immediately before imparting the first baptism in each text:

> And I will give to you every mystery, so that I may fulfill you in every mystery of the Kingdom of Light, so that you may be called: 'Sons of the Pleroma,' fulfilled in every mystery.
>
> *2 Jeu* B21(59),23–26

The focus is very much on the disciples immediately undergoing this rite, and the honor that they will receive. The baptisms eventually culminate in individual fulfillment in the one worthy of undergoing them.

> I will give to you the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven so that you yourselves perform them (the mysteries) for men.
>
> *4PS*a 141[369]

Here it is much more instructional: the mysteries are given so that they might be passed on to others, trying to reach a maximum number of people to be saved through receiving the purifying mysteries. If the group as a whole has become more concerned with reaching out to as many people as possible and getting a wide base of members, then potentially the first initiatory rites were simplified to facilitate bringing in an increased number of converts. This would explain the absence of the long list of potentially expensive plants, incenses and other offering materials, eliminated to make the ritual more accessible for poorer members. However, it does not explain why the seals are omitted, why cups of water are added from the beginning, or why the bread and water/wine play no role in the proceedings.

Another possible explanation for the differences is the intended purpose or readership of the two texts. *2 Jeu* focuses exclusively on listing the divine mysteries, giving extremely detailed and explicit information for both how the baptisms are to be carried out, and the knowledge required to ascend through the aeons. It seems likely that the intended reader of this text would have been someone officiating the rituals, a teacher who had already undergone them and was now expected to prepare them for new initiates. As a ritual manual, all of the minute details would be necessary to make the preparations and properly perform the rites. *4Ps*a, on the other hand, contains a great deal of background mythological information, and only a relatively small amount of ritual material—indeed, it only explains the first, lowest baptism out of a series of several, while acknowledging that the later rites exist and will be given in time. This suggests that the book's intended reader is someone receiving basic instruction: someone who still requires knowledge of the group's mythology, who needs instruction in or reinforcement of the moral or lifestyle requirements for admission to the group, and who is probably close to undergoing the first baptism. Thus, the text gives the reader a glimpse of what to expect, without giving away all of the signs or sensory experiences involved. The text also highlights the position of the disciples as those granted these mysteries for the explicit purpose of being passed on to other believers, assuring the reader of the lineage of the rituals and the authority of the priest or ritual officiant.

Regardless of the reason for the differences in the description of the ritual, the fact that the *nomina barbara* found in the prayer are different demonstrates that some sort of changes had taken place between the writing of the two versions. The notion that three baptisms were necessary remains constant, as do the basic elements of prayer, phrasing, and offering, but other details varied over time.

5 Summary

While the two *Books of Jeu* were primarily ritual manuals and repositories for the ascension mysteries, intended to be read by either ritual officiants or those who had already received the baptisms and had earned the right to higher knowledge, *4PS*a was probably intended for use by people nearing the time for the first baptism, or lowest level of initiation. Thus, it provides vital background: important mythical information that might have been kept secret until a member had proven their faithfulness for a period, and moral instruction on what is necessary—or rather, what is forbidden—to be worthy of the rites. Once this information has been absorbed and accepted, a bare-bones explanation of the first initiation is given, to give the initiate a basic idea of what to expect. The details, however, are not recorded, having to be experienced to more fully understand the signs and significance involved in the ritual. With the text's focus on giving the rite of baptism to other believers, it is likely that part of its purpose was to reinforce both the necessity of the ritual, and the authority of the disciples and the priests who came after them to perform it.

Being composed later than the preceding texts, this book has noticeable differences in the cosmology. The fact that great lengths are taken to explain and outline the setup and contents of the left, or the material and punishment regions, demonstrates that cosmological speculation was still of the utmost importance. Knowledge of the lowest regions was particularly important to those about to be initiated, the better to avoid the temptations of the archons and the mistakes that they make. It is important to note that although they are discussed very little here due to the nature of the text, the most vital aspects of the Jeuian system—the structure of and entities dwelling within the higher regions, the place of the right or the Treasury of Light—remain stable. Views of the lower world could and did change to reflect elements from other religions or philosophies, but the higher realms and the mode of salvation remained relatively constant.

It is noteworthy that the particular construction of the visible cosmos found here—the aeons housing the planets and surrounding the five regions of the Midst, and the imprisonment of the wicked aeonic archons within the sphere of fate—appears to be a development of the earlier concept of the aeons as they are described in *2 Jeu*. Although it is a slightly *different* outline, it is still reasonably logical within this group's developmental trajectory, as it shifts within a cultural climate rife with scientific theories on astrology and conflicting religious outlooks. This text in particular has a fixation on astrological and magical concepts popular in the Greco-Roman period. More than any other extant

Jeuian text, it holds to well-known astrological beliefs about the planets and their natures, while inserting them into the Jeuian system of divine figures and cosmology.

Furthermore, this book contains a number of passages with themes or images found nowhere else in the extant Jeuian system—for example, the description of the boat of the moon (*4PS*a 136[354–355]), with its possible Manichaean or Egyptian roots, or the section relating blood and wine to gospel passages (*4PS*a 141[367–369]). This, combined with the unique interest in magical names, shows that the author of this book had available—and was open to using—a wide variety of texts and outside religious concepts. The fact that no other extant Jeuian text shares these particular esoteric themes shows that even if they were temporarily popular within the wider Jeuian group, they did not remain so, and were quickly set aside.

*4PS*a thus represents a snapshot of part of the cultural environment in which at least some of the Jeuians existed, incorporating a wide variety of texts and influences into the given Jeuian structure. Intended for the soon-to-be baptized, this text presents a perspective on the structure of the visible cosmos, lays out a code of forbidden conduct for the believer, and prepares the reader for the purification to come.

Part 1: Summary

Of the extant Jeuian texts, the ones most likely containing the earliest material are those that present instructions for purification rituals and ascension of the soul: *1 Jeu*, *2 Jeu*, and *4Ps*a. These rites or mysteries form the core of Jeuian soteriological belief: even in the texts that lack a ritual focus themselves, reference is made to receiving them as the *only* way for a soul to be saved. Righteous living and proper belief are not enough, although for such souls reincarnation into a good body that will find the mysteries is promised.

Each of these texts was composed for a different intended audience. *1* and *2 Jeu*, containing the most extensive and explicit mystery information, were likely composed for priests, instructors, or ritual officiants within the group. Thus, although each baptism or piece of information was probably meant to be imparted to initiates individually over a long period of time, these texts present all of the details needed to successfully complete each purification rite, as well as all of the information for each and every station along the soul's ascent. They comprise a complete handbook for the innermost mysteries of the group. *4Ps*a, on the other hand, was probably written for a novice, someone about to undergo his or her first baptism, and thus has much more basic details of the one baptism it describes, and simply hints at the future baptisms to come. It accentuates the fact that the ritual described was given to the disciples by Jesus, with the specific injunction that it be passed on to those who prove themselves worthy, thus providing proof of the rite's necessity and validity to the potential recipient. This proposed background also explains the inclusion of the mythology and moral injunctions that this text contains, which were necessary preparation for a new initiate, but not in a ritual handbook intended for more experienced members.

As noted above, the fact that there are multiple baptismal or purificatory rituals suggests that there were multiple levels of initiation, with each level being earned over time. *2 Jeu* in particular highlights the secretive nature of the group, and the stringent code to which one who would receive the mysteries must adhere; doubtless after the receipt of one, the initiate would be expected to gradually prove him or herself worthy of the next level. This notion is supported by statements in the later texts, particularly *3Ps*. The reason for all of the rituals being presented in close succession in *2 Jeu* is related to the text's purpose as a complete ritual guide.

It is important to note that mystery-ritual and cosmology go hand in hand for this group. The majority of the esoteric information imparted to the mystery recipients consists of knowledge for the soul on how to pass through all of

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the regions of the divine and sub-divine realms. Thus, a great deal of space is dedicated to outlining each region and the beings that dwell in that region. This type of information makes up the majority of *1 Jeu*, with one section devoted to mapping each treasury and a second focused on providing the seals, ciphers and names necessary to pass through it; and a large portion of *2 Jeu*, which presents the names of the entities in each material aeon in conjunction with the password information. The description of the five regions of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ) in *4PS*a serves other purposes, both outlining a list of moral or ethical prohibitions for the righteous, and highlighting the astrological mode of the cycle of punishment and reincarnation embraced by the group at the time.

These earliest texts also have the simplest overall cosmologies, although the version found in *4PS*a begins a trend toward increasing complexity. The basic outline consists of the Treasury of Light, also called the place of the right; the thirteen aeons, or the place of the left; and the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), a middle region dividing these divine and material regions. The Treasury is the destination for souls who in life received the baptisms and mysteries of the Jeuians, the aeons are where souls that failed to receive them are stopped and punished, and the Midst serves as a place of waiting and judgment for souls to be allowed passage into the higher place of the right, or recast into the world. *4PS*a adds to these the five realms of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ), which take the place of the aeons as the realms of punishment populated with vicious archons.

Each of the main cosmological realms is also home to a number of important figures in Jeuian mythology: the Treasury of Light is home to Jeu, who populates the Treasury, organizes the visible cosmos, and oversees the archons of the aeons; Zorokothora (Melchisedek), who acts as a divine porter, transporting baptismal waters to earth and light from the places of the left back into the Treasury; and the Great Sabaoth the Good, whose role in these three texts is quite vague, although he is placed almost on par with Jeu and Zorokothora in *4PS*a. Jeu may have solar associations based on his role in organizing the visible cosmos, with himself as center and ruler; he is called one of the "two great lights" in conjunction with Zorokothora Melchisedek in *4PS*a, lending further support to this notion. The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is home to the Virgin of Light, the judge, who also has solar connections that grow clearer in the later texts; and the Little Sabaoth the Good, who appears primarily in association with Zeus/Jupiter, benefic leader of the planets, and who thus plays a positive role by aiding in the destruction of evil archons and releasing imprisoned souls. The entities of the aeons have a different arrangement in *2 Jeu* than in the later texts: the standard arrangement has the invisible god, the Barbelo, and the triple powered ones in the thirteenth aeon, each of these a polemic addition against the Sethians; and Sabaoth the Adamas, the head of evil, as ruler of the twelve aeons.

The description of the treasuries in *1 Jeu* strongly reflects Egyptian mortuary literature or ascension guides. It is quite possible that in its earliest form, the treasuries of light represent the starry sky, and the Egyptian belief in the destiny of certain souls to find a place in the celestial sphere. If the ideas in *2 Jeu* are basically contemporary with *1 Jeu*, then the aeons, with their unusual division of the first five being wholly negative and the upper seven being more neutral, likely represent five sublunar and seven planetary realms. The soul's journey begins on earth and moves up through the solar system, aiming for the celestial sphere of fixed stars. The soul can only travel so far as it has permission, based on how many of the baptisms and other mysteries it has received. Although the principle of the soul journey appears to be similar in *4Ps*a, the structure of the aeons seems to be more in line with common Greco-Roman astrological notions, and the aeons take the form of the visible zodiac. It is unclear whether the destination of the saved soul in this case is still the celestial retinue, or whether it is now a more abstract region.

Initially a highly secretive, Egyptian ascension cult with multiple ranks of members, it gradually developed an increased interest in Greek astrology and magic, incorporating traditional planetary notions and important magical names. Manichaean and Sethian influence were also present in their cultural environment; but while Manichaean notions were probably developing at the same time and with all their fluidity could be adapted and adopted, the Sethians were seen as more of a threat. Thus, polemic against their primary mythological figures was incorporated into the description of their lower, material cosmology. In all things and through all cosmological or doctrinal developments, the primacy of the central Jeuian soteriological principles and ascension mysteries was maintained.

PART 2

Punishments & Moral Living

CHAPTER 5

4 Pistis Sophia (b)

1 Introduction to the Text

After the lacuna in what is commonly known as the fourth book of the *Pistis Sophia*, a new text begins which focuses solely on the punishments of sinners and the destiny of various types of souls (*4PS*b 144–148[374–384]).[1] The majority of this fragmentary text is formulaic: the disciples ask what punishments await certain sinners, and Jesus explains the order of realms in which those souls shall be subjected to torment.

The cosmology here is different from *4PS*a: the underworld has been expanded, with several different regions of punishment rather than just one with several divisions. There are also different timeframes for punishment—with some of the sins (for example, murder) covered in both *4PS*a and b, presenting different results based on the differing systems. The types of sins worthy of punishment provide a glimpse of the group's ethical code: cursing, slander, murder, robbery and thievery, and pride and scorn are all worthy of punishment for specific periods. After this, the soul is reincarnated in a body worthy of the sins it had committed. Other sins such as blasphemy, pederasty, and participation in certain other cults' wicked rites all result in punishment followed by the dissolution of the soul in the outer darkness.

In addition to this ethical code, a degree of astrological determination in transmigration is also discussed: when the planets are in certain positions relative to the Virgin of Light (apparently representing the sun), souls sent into the world will be either all righteous or all wicked. This shows an acceptance of the inevitability of fate that fades, and is in fact overturned, in the later texts.

1 Although most scholars have not distinguished this text from the preceding *4PS*a, G.R.S. Mead (*Pistis Sophia*, xxii, 315) recognizes the subject change and suggests it may be another "book," although he maintains its inclusion within the "fourth division" of the manuscript and does not observe its close ties with *3PS*. F. Legge also places a division here and goes further in recognizing the similarities it shares with *3PS* ("Introduction," xxviii). C. Schmidt gives a refutation of Legge's division, but his arguments are unconvincing (*Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk des dritten Jahrhunderts aus dem Koptischen übersetzt* [1925; reprint: Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2010], 69n.4).

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In terms of original composition, it is chronologically the earliest text to turn away from focus on baptisms or initiatory practices, discussion of the highest divine realms, and presentation of the mysteries to access them. The text serves to highlight improper behavior and its punishments; to present a schema of underworld or punishment realms and their rulers; and to develop the concept of transmigration in relation to both sin and astrology.

2 Cosmology

As with the previous texts, cosmology is of great concern in this phase of Jeuian literature. However, unlike the preceding texts that focused on the divine realms and the material aeons, here the concern is overwhelmingly with developing the underworld—realms existing for the punishment of sinful souls. It takes the concept of specific punishment-realms to an extreme unrivaled by the negative aeons in *2 Jeu* or the sin-specific regions of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ in *4Ps*a, with no fewer than four separate punishment realms. Rather than staying in one place based on the type of one's sin as in *4Ps*a, here a soul is moved from region to region, with the order of the regions visited and the timeframe in each determined by the type of sin. As might be expected in a very short and fragmentary text dealing primarily with the fate of sinful souls, there is minimal discussion of the upper divine realms. However, there is one reference to the Treasury of Light near the end of the text: it is said that one who in the end receives the mysteries of the light will inherit the Treasury of Light, even if they committed all sorts of iniquities before performing these mysteries (*4Ps*b 148[383]). Thus, it is referenced at the end of the warnings regarding the fruits of a sinful life, perhaps to give hope to the reader as a sinner now attempting to turn to the path of righteousness and receive the mysteries.

The discussion here begins with the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ; as the realm of judgment, it is the highest cosmological realm to merit particular discussion of its role and that of its primary residents.

2.1 *The* ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ

The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is the region of judgment, and of the soul's preparation to be sent back into the world if it did not receive the mysteries or commit any sins worthy of destruction in the outer darkness. There are two main figures who dwell here: the Little Sabaoth the Good, and the Virgin of Light. As noted in Ch. 4, the Virgin of Light is the judge of souls. Each sinful soul reaches her after it has been through all of the relevant punishment realms, and she judges it and gives it to her receivers when "the sphere turns," or when the planets reach an

appropriate alignment for the soul to receive a body and situation appropriate to its past actions. If Zeus and Aphrodite are in her presence and Cronos and Ares are behind her, then souls that enter the world will be righteous; if the situation is reversed, then souls become wicked. The Virgin of Light in the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ appears to be thus associated with the sun, with the planets' positions relative to her being a decisive factor in the nature of souls entering the world. The term ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ was associated with the ecliptic, or the path of the sun through the sky, so this association is not entirely surprising; however, the fact that the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is apparently located above the celestial aeons on the border of the divine light-realm *is* rather unusual. Given the shifting nature of the planets and visible celestial bodies in the Jeuian system, it is possible that these elements may be holdovers from earlier terminology that embraced the stars as the destination of the soul. Later texts further support her association with the "true form" of the sun, long after planetary and physical heavenly bodies cease to play a positive role.[2]

Aside from the Virgin of Light, the main figure associated with the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is the Little Sabaoth the Good. In contrast to his portrayal in *4PS*a, in *4PS*b he carries out actions in his own right, and is not tied to Zeus—although Zeus/Jupiter still has a key role to play, it is independent. While most of the text deals with souls that must be punished for sins, one passage discusses what happens to one who committed no sins but did not receive the mysteries: it is shown some of the places of correction without being punished, and then is taken to the Virgin of Light, who judges it and places it with the Little Sabaoth the Good. The soul remains there until the planets reach a favorable configuration to go before the judge of souls. After the soul is given the cup of forgetfulness by one of Sabaoth the Adamas' receivers, then a receiver of the Little Sabaoth the Good "brings a cup which is filled with understanding and wisdom, and there is soberness in it. And he gives it to the soul, and it is cast into a body which is not able to sleep nor is it able to forget … it will be a goad to its heart continually, to seek for the mysteries of the light until it finds them" (*4PS*b 147[383]).

Thus, in *4PS*b, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ continues to function as a buffer between the wicked aeons/place of the left and the good Treasury/place of the right. It is a place of judgment, where the Virgin of Light decides what type of body a soul is to be reincarnated into, and where souls are kept until the proper planetary alignment occurs for that fate to be carried out. The Little Sabaoth the Good assists in the reincarnation process, and provides righteous souls a

2 See Ch. 7.

sip of the cup of wisdom to counteract the cup of forgetfulness given to all souls reentering the world. Its role as a place of judgment explains its prominent position within this extremely fragmentary text on punishments. Furthermore, being the location of judgment is a logical progression from its role as place where souls wait for the end of time in *2 Jeu*, moving from a sense of purgatorial patience between worlds to an immediate sentence for the soul to either be admitted to the Treasury, or reenter the world and attempt to receive the mysteries.

2.2 *The Thirteenth Aeon?*

*4PS*b and *3PS* belong to a separate strand of tradition that did not include the thirteenth aeon, despite the inclusion of one of the triple-powered ones that typically dwell there in the Jeuian system. The lone triple-powered one appearing here is ⲃⲁⲓⲏⲭⲱⲱⲱⲭ, associated with the neutral Hermes/Mercury in *4PS*a, and is here referred to in a positive sense. His receivers take the soul of the sinless man who has not received the mysteries "with joy and gladness," teach it of the creation of the world, show it the places of correction without revenge being taken on it, and finally bring it before the Virgin of the Light, the judge, such that it is recast into a righteous body (*4PS*b 147[381–382]). This same tradition of a single positive triple-powered god is also found in *3PS*, where he fulfills the same type of role (*3PS* 103[262–263]). *3PS* clearly excludes the thirteenth aeon in its cosmological layout, as will be discussed in the next chapter. As such, despite the fragmentary nature of *4PS*b and the importance afforded to one of the triple-powered ones, it is reasonable to conclude that its cosmology does *not* include the thirteenth aeon. Its absence may be related to the unusual lack of Sethian polemic found in this set of two texts, as will be discussed below; the thirteenth aeon typically acts primarily as residence to the higher Sethian deities, which in Jeuian terms are reduced to mere material archons dwelling in the aeonic regions.

2.3 *The Aeons of the Sphere*

In *4PS*b the aeons are not enumerated, but the souls of the judged that are not cast into the outer darkness are sent to the aeons of the sphere. There, the receiver of Sabaoth the Adamas gives them a cup of forgetfulness, denying them the knowledge they had acquired from previous lives and punishments (*4PS*b 144[374, 376]; 146[378, 379]; 146[382]).[3] The soul is then cast again into the world

3 Although there is little connection between this figure and those called "Sabaoth" or "Adamas" in other Gnostic mythologies, it is worth noting the parallel that the chief archon in the

in a body befitting its past sins, demonstrating a connection between Sabaoth the Adamas, these aeons of the sphere, and fate, the Heimarmene/zodiac. As opposed to the preceding texts, here Sabaoth the Adamas finally has a clear connection with the aeons/sphere, holding a position of power rather than being imprisoned within it. While past descriptions focused on his association with sexual sins, highlighting an attachment to sensuality/physicality, here his wicked nature is expanded to include an active role in making the learning process and purification of human souls more difficult—although this role is also an accepted part of the cycle of reincarnation, with the Virgin of Light sending souls to him in the aeons of the sphere.

2.4 *Amente*

Amente, or the western place, appears only in *4PS*b and *3PS*, which as already noted form a set in terms of their overall cosmology and themes. These two texts have the greatest focus on punishments of sinners, as well as the most complex system of underworlds or punishment realms. Amente here forms the first and least harsh of these, followed by the Chaos, the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ, and the outer darkness.[4]

The term "Amente" is from the Egyptian term for the place of the dead, the western place where the sun set, which in the ancient Egyptian religion was not considered a negative destination for the soul. Here, it has been transformed into a place of temporary punishment for sinning souls rather than a place of eternal life or rest. The head of this region is called Ariel, and is described in *3PS* as having a dog-head—reminiscent of Anubis, the jackal-headed god of the underworld or judgment in Egyptian religion.[5] Thus the region is clearly adopted from its Egyptian context, transformed in the process into a fiery realm of torture. The only other information given is that it has rivers, seas, and pits of fire (*3PS* 102[256–258]), and that Ariel has two receivers, Abiut and Charmon (*4PS*b 144[375]), which take certain souls for three days, teaching them of the creation of the world before subjecting them to their rightful punishments. Although there is no direct correspondence between the punishments

long recension of *ApJohn*, who is also closely involved with a wicked interpretation of fate, is associated with "water of forgetfulness" that makes humans forget their origins (*ApJohn* II 25,7; IV 39,4–5).

4 *3PS* 127[321–322] gives an explicit order for these realms and their relative harshness. This order is generally maintained wherever they appear in these two texts, although in certain cases some of the realms may be skipped based on the nature of the sin/punishment required.

5 See also Section 6.3.1.3.

associated with Amente in *4PS*b and *3PS*, it seems that only lesser sinners are first brought here: in *4PS*b those who have murdered or blasphemed (considered extremely serious sins) are first brought to the Chaos, a far worse realm.

Amente in the Jeuian context is thus perhaps best summarized as a minor realm of punishment, adopted and adapted from Egyptian tradition. It is included in the overall cosmology within a fairly limited strand of tradition, based on the textual evidence remaining. Its role and origin from a Jeuian perspective are obscure, and its functions become obsolete with changing views of punishment and salvation.

2.5 *The Chaos*

The Chaos also appears first and foremost in *4PS*b and *3PS*. It is the first stop of the more serious sinners (apart from those who consume sperm and menstrual blood, who are doomed directly to the outer darkness). In *3PS* it is forbidden to lead a soul that has received the mysteries to the Chaos(es), although it does travel along the path of the ⲙⲏⲧⲉ (*3PS* 112[289]). This realm is the home of Jaldabaoth, the primary villain and world-creator in many Gnostic texts. In *4PS*b he rules over 49 demons, which flagellate the souls of sinners with fiery scourges. In *3PS* he is described as having a lion-face, as is typical of depictions of this figure.[6] Interestingly, there is one reference in *4PS*b to a region of Chaos as the home of Persephone (*4PS*b 145[377]). In Greek mythology she is considered the goddess of the underworld; here she is tied to the punishing of the sinful dead. Unfortunately the text is fragmentary and there is no way of knowing if further explanation of her role or region of Chaos is given.[7]

The Chaos plays a role primarily as a place of punishment for sinful souls. It is introduced here in *4PS*b and plays its greatest role in this text and *3PS*, at the height of the group's interest in sins and their repercussions. Although it is associated with Jaldabaoth, who in other Gnostic traditions dwells in the cosmic spheres and is considered the creator of the world, humanity, and fate, here all of these actions are attributed to other entities. Even in its role as

6 See T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 106–128; H.M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

7 It is also interesting that *4PS*a and b are the only texts to preserve elements of Greek mythology, in the form of the planet names, this single appearance of Persephone, and one reference to Adonis as an underworld being (*4PS*b 146[377])—even *3PS*, with its strong ties to *4PS*b, lacks these elements, having reduced the planets to nameless archons. This may suggest a period or strand of interest in the Greek mysteries and mythology in the Jeuians' development, which was quickly dissolved into the prevailing mythos and language of the group.

punishment-realm, it is neither the least nor worst to which a soul could be subject, sandwiched as it is by Amente and the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ.

2.6 *The* ⲙⲛⲧⲉ

Although the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ apparently began with an association with the planets in *1 Jeu*, and in *4PS*a it appears as a set of sublunar realms while maintaining traces of its planetary origin in its ability to give humans certain negative traits in life, in *4PS*b all of these associations are lost: it becomes simply another realm of punishment. Unlike the five great archons specified for it in *4PS*a, or the 49 demons of Jaldabaoth in the Chaos described in *4PS*b, no specific number of archons is assigned to the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ at this point: "each one" of the archons deals out unspecified punishment (related to smoke and fire; *4PS*b 146[378–379], 147[382]) for a period of time. Divorced from its astrological significance, it is but one of many punishment realms adopted by this author, without explanation of what makes its residents evil or what hold it has over the souls it torments as is given in the previous text.

2.7 *Outer Darkness*

While *4PS*a briefly refers to the outer darkness, most likely associated with the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, in *4PS*b it is represented in its own right as the ultimate destination for punishment of the worst sinners. The sins worthy of being cast there are such that the soul is given no chance to be reincarnated in the world after its punishments, instead being destroyed at the final judgment. The text is incomplete so the full list of sins with their accompanying repercussions is uncertain, but the three causes of being sentenced to the outer darkness found here—murder, blasphemy, and pederasty—are in line with the fuller lists of outer darkness-worthy sins found in *3PS*. The outer darkness is in these cases the final stop in a series of the punishment realms through which the sinful soul must travel. The only sin discussed which is not on those later lists—consuming semen and menstrual blood in worship—is a special case leading to instant transport to the outer darkness, with no stops in the Chaos or other realms (*4PS*b 147[381]).[8]

Descriptions of the realm itself in this text are minimal. It is associated with a dragon-faced archon (*4PS*b 146[380]), as is its hallmark in *3PS*. It is

8 This apparently refers to a particular sect that was a threat to this group, as *2 Jeu* also presents this specific, rather unusual practice as the most heinous of sins. This group, or one with similar practices, was evidently known to Epiphanius as well (*Pan* 26.4.5–5.1). The fact that *3PS*, with its parallel focus on specific sins, makes no mention of it suggests that perhaps by that point the sect in question was no longer a threat.

said to be a "place in which there is no pity, nor is there light. But there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" (*4PS*b 147[381]).[9] Finally, the time of its dissolution is described as "when the darkness of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ will be lifted" (*4PS*b 145[377]). While the two regions are clearly distinct in this text, this continues the suggestion of a connection or border between the outer darkness and the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ.

2.8 4PS*b*—*Cosmology Summary*

Speculation on the punishment realms reaches a plateau here, found also in *3PS* but lacking elsewhere. This is a highly fragmentary text, so it is uncertain if the upper regions receive treatment in the first portion of it; as it stands, the existence of the Treasury of Light is confirmed by a single reference. The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is also an important part of the system, acting as a place of judgment of souls and base for issuing souls for reincarnation, based on the works of the Virgin of Light and the Little Sabaoth the Good, "he of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ." Although not enumerated as in other texts, the aeons of the sphere/zodiac play a role in the sending of souls into the world, and the planets maintain their Greek names and natures.

By far the primary focus in this text is outlining the fates of sinners based on their sins, and this presents the reader with an impressive list of possible destinations: from the least to worst, these include Amente, the Chaos, the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, and the outer darkness. The sequence of regions included in the postmortem journey and the length of time spent in each is based on one's life. The outer darkness is reserved for the very worst sinners, and once there, there is no hope of another chance. The Chaos is included for most of those who are eventually outer-darkness bound. More general sinners are taken to Amente, the Chaos and the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ; while those who lived righteously but did not receive the mysteries visit only Amente and the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ (*4PS*b 147[382]).[10] It appears that the Chaos was viewed in a darker perspective than the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, despite the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ's greater fierceness of punishments.

All of these regions originate in the cosmologies of other religious traditions; with the great concern this author shows for sins and punishments, it seems as though he or she adopted several different punishment realms without

9 See Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30; also Mt. 13:42, 50.

10 In *3PS* the soul that receives the mysteries and is freed from the bonds of the counterfeit spirit is taken past the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, but it is explicitly forbidden for it to be led through the Chaoses (*3PS* 112[289]). It seems as though there was a particular stigma against the Chaos in regards to the righteous, and that this region could be easily bypassed.

particular concern for the background or origin of each. However, given that the length of time spent in these punishments, and the number and type of these realms to which one was subjected, varied based on the nature of the sin, it is clear that a sense of justice *was* important to the author. Indeed, even the type of body one is cast into after having undergone these punishments is designed to be fitting to one's past crimes, and one who lived righteously but did not receive the mysteries is sent into a form that will surely find them in its next foray on earth.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Astrology in* 4PS*b*

Under the cosmology of this tradition, both the number of realms of punishment and the time given for punishment of a particular type of sinner have increased. For example a murderer, who in *4PS*a faces 113 years under the torments of Ariuth, is tortured in the each of the places of frost and snow, the places of Jaldabaoth in Chaos, the places of Persephone in Chaos, and the way of the Midst by each of their inhabitants for three years and six months. Thus with Jaldabaoth and his 49 demons each taking a turn, the murderer is subject to over 170 years of punishment in the Chaos alone. As the first part of the text is missing, any clues to the system being used to determine these periods are lost. However, the positions of the aeons/zodiac and the benefic and malefic planets still play a role in the cycle of transmigration.

The Virgin of Light, the Judge, sends souls back into the world at suitable alignments of these entities, ensuring the just deserts of sinners and the eventual receipt of mysteries and salvation for the righteous. Generally speaking, when Jupiter and Venus are in her presence in their own aeons and Saturn and Mars are behind her, all souls going into the world will become righteous; but when Saturn and Mars are in her presence and she cannot see Jupiter and Venus, all souls going into the world will be wicked and unable to find the mysteries of the light (*4PS*b 148[383–384]). It is unclear whether the traditional planetary houses of the zodiac are intended here, or whether they utilized their own system of planet-aeon associations, as in *4PS*a.[11] For those souls that

11 Interestingly, using the traditional attribution of the planetary houses, with Jupiter and Venus in their own houses only a sextile aspect is possible; but if Jupiter is allowed Virgo as suggested in *4PS*a, then the powerful, positive trine aspect with Venus becomes possible. However, given the positive effects associated with opposition in *4PS*a, traditionally a

committed no sins but did not receive the mysteries, the Virgin of Light places them with the Little Sabaoth the Good, until a positive planetary alignment occurs—thus guaranteeing a positive reincarnation (*4PS*b 147[382]).

There is a conflict, as the Virgin of Light here seems to represent the sun—the planets come into contact with her, and in other texts her location, the neutral Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), is associated explicitly with the sun's light.[12] However, the realm of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) is also considered to be a higher realm than that of the aeons through which the planets move. Regardless of the specific nature of the Virgin of Light and her realm here, that at least some of her attributes are tied to those of the sun seems highly likely. Ptolemy views the sun as a neutral planet (*Tetrabiblos* I.5), taking on the attributes of those planets it becomes associated with. Here we have the Virgin of Light bestowing beneficial lives when in aspect with the benefic planets in their own aeons, and when in aspect with the malefic planets, all souls that go into creation become wicked.

3.2 *Interaction with Sethians*

With such a fragmentary text as this, there is little information to begin attempting to piece together what influences came together in its composition. Certainly in previous texts, Sethian polemic is present, so finding traces here would not be surprising; more surprising is the fact that polemic marginalizing Sethian figures is relatively *minimal* here in this discussion of the lower regions. Besides a lone triple-powered one—which appears in a relatively positive sense—the only Sethian figure to appear is Jaldabaoth, who shows clear signs of being closely adopted from Sethian or related traditions, without obvious attempts to marginalize his role.

In *4PS*b and *3PS*, Jaldabaoth plays the role of the head of Chaos, where he punishes wicked souls along with his 49 demons. Jaldabaoth's realms are also called Chaos elsewhere (*HypArch* 93,31; 96,11; *TrimProt* 39,21–27), and while in the *Apocryphon of John* the Chaos consists of the five sublunar realms for which he creates rulers (*ApJohn* III 17,19; BG 41,15), he is more frequently tied closer to the seven planetary realms and their denizens.[13] The Chaos in *4PS*b/*3PS* has

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negative aspect, one should be cautious against positing too strong an importance for the traditional powers and roles of these aspects.

12 This is clearest in *4PS*a 136[355–356] when the believing archons of Jabraoth are placed "in the presence of the light of the sun, between the places of those of the Midst …" and also in *2PS* 186: "But the light of the sun in its true form, which is in the place of the Virgin of the Light, is lighted ten thousand times more than the 24 invisible ones and the great invisible one and also the great triple-powered god …"

13 See Irenaeus *AdvHaer* I.30.5; Origen *Cels* VI.31; *ApJohn* III 17,20–18,13; II 11,26–12,6; BG 41,16–

a somewhat ambiguous location given the multiplicity of punishment/underworld realms present in those two texts, but it is certainly located below the twelve aeons or fate-sphere. The 49 demons associated with him suggest a connection with the seven planets, with an equal number of demons per planet and him as their head. However, the traditional Greek conceptions of the planets still play a role in *4PS*b. It is possible the author deliberately does not mention the planetary connection so as to provide him a role as a negative being in his system without conflicting with the current interpretation of the planets. It should also be noted that *OrigWorld*, which has close ties to *HypArch* but is not itself considered Sethian, depicts Jaldabaoth ruling over seven heavens called Chaos (102,2), as well as 49 chaotic demons ultimately arising from Jaldabaoth's wrath (106,23–107,1). It is possible that that author of *4PS*b—and later that of *3PS*—was familiar with and appreciated aspects of this account.

4 Key Concepts

*4PS*b and its closest sibling, *3PS*, are unique among the Jeuian texts in their overwhelming concern with sins, punishments, and the realms of punishment. With only ten pages remaining of this fragmentary text, *4PS*b deals entirely with the fates of various souls, mostly using formulaic discussion: one of the disciples asks the fate of a man who has committed some specific sin, and Jesus replies that when that man's time is completed through the sphere, certain receivers will come for his soul, and he gives a detailed explanation of which realms that soul will be punished in and for what duration. Although *4PS*b and *3PS* share the same hierarchy of the underworld, *4PS*b is distinctive in this repetitive, formulaic format. Other elements that perhaps most exemplify the uniqueness of this brief text are twofold.

First, it contains some holdovers from tradition found otherwise only in *4PS*a: the use of Greek planetary names and astrological science, with the positions of the benefic and malefic planets playing a key role in the nature of the individual born on Earth. These elements are utilized with a different system from its predecessor, necessary changes given the dramatically different cosmology of the punishment realms and science of reincarnation this text features. It should be considered that *4PS*a itself appears to be a modification of

42,15; *OrigWorld* 101,24–102,2. See also T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 104, for a chart outlining the seven archons and Jaldabaoth's position across textual bounds. Although his inclusion of *2 Jeu* in the list is dubious, the presentation of the other texts is most helpful.

earlier ideas of the planets and sublunar realms, and in *3PS* and later texts, the use of planetary names and the concept of the planets potentially having a positive role in reincarnation have been completely eradicated. These facts suggest that *4PS*b is an important stepping-stone in the development of the group's theories of astrological powers and reincarnation from one of a relatively positive natural process to one of malevolent entities working to enslave the human spirit.

Second, it features certain figures from Greek mythology, Persephone and Adonis (ⲡⲉⲣⲥⲉⲫⲟⲛⲏ and ⲁ̀ⲇⲱⲛⲓⲥ, *4PS*b 146–147[377]), who appear nowhere else in the Jeuian texts.[14] Little description is given of these figures or their roles in the wider cosmology or mythology, other than the fact that they are related to the punishment realms. The fact that they only appear here, much like the use of popular magical names or words in *4PS*a, suggests that these entities—or myths featuring them—went through a brief period of vogue either in the wider group or within the mind of this particular author. They quickly passed out of the group's vernacular, however, leaving little lasting impact in later interpretations of the regions of punishment or the path of the soul after death.

5 Summary

This text represents the earliest extant Jeuian document without a focus on ritual or initiation. It was most likely written at a time when the moderate view of Hellenistic-style astrology found in *4PS*a was still acceptable—albeit in the context of greatly modified theories of underworld-cosmology and planetary roles in soul nature and reincarnation—but before the language of the spaces or mysteries of the First Mystery and the Ineffable that become prominent from *3PS* onward. In the terms of the present study, it moves into the next thematic block, exploring actions or behaviors considered sinful, their consequences after death, and the reasons that the soul is driven to sin in terms of astrological determinism and the construction of the human being. As the previous texts were instruction manuals of ritual and ascent of the soul, this text is in part an instruction manual on proper living to be made worthy of the mysteries given in the last section. These "instructions" are presented in the form of an "anti-code"

14 It might be noted that one of the archons in certain Sethian texts is called Adonaios (ⲁ̀ⲇⲱⲛⲁⲓⲟⲥ), but given the lack of reference to any other names reminiscent of those in these Sethian lists, and the presence of Persephone here, it seems likely that the Greek Adonis is meant here.

of ethics, a series of warnings as to what happens to those souls that engage in sinful behavior, with the implied righteous path avoiding all of these pitfalls.

As with past texts, cosmological knowledge is clearly considered vital, although here the focus is on souls that did not receive the mysteries and thus lack the knowledge to avoid the pitfalls awaiting the soul after death. This text was probably intended to be read while an individual was still preparing for initiation, as a guide to unacceptable behaviors and to instill fear of the consequences if the group's rules of conduct were broken. Since the reader is not yet ready for initiation, no hint is given of the type of knowledge the mysteries impart to facilitate the soul's postmortem journey. Rather, focus is on right living to become worthy of the mysteries and to avoid the horrible punishments awaiting those who sin. It also serves to explain some of the science of the group's theory of reincarnation, detailing the positions of the planets necessary for rebirth with a high chance of finding the mysteries versus setups that result in certain wickedness.

CHAPTER 6

3 Pistis Sophia

1 Introduction to the Text

Although *1–3PS* are often viewed as a group, *3PS* is not always considered a direct continuation of the first two.[1] There are several indications that *3PS* is not continuous with *1/2PS*, not least of which is the dramatically different cosmology found in each. As has already been discussed and shall be further demonstrated below, *3PS* shares much closer ties with *4PS*b in terms of its cosmology, concern with sins and their punishments, and the format of questions-and-answers between the disciples and Jesus used to present this information.[2] Perhaps the most overt sign that *3PS* is separate from and chronologically prior to *1/2PS* is the difference between the two in their tone regarding the "Books of Jeu." *3PS* specifies that the mysteries in these books are necessary for all—even for "the righteous themselves who have never done evil, and have not committed sins at all" (*3PS* 134[349]). *2PS*, however, is more cautious; while admitting they contain exceedingly numerous mysteries of the portions of light, it states that "you [the disciples] have no need for the remainder of the inferior mysteries, but you will find them in the two Books of Jeu" (*2PS* 99[247]). Although *2PS* still views the Books of Jeu as containing necessary information, *3PS* gives no hint of any part of them being "inferior" or unnecessary.[3] Furthermore

1 G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia*, xxiv; F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, 183; F. Legge, "Introduction," xiv, xxii; J. Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypt: Introduction aux écrits gnostiques coptes découvert à Khénoboskion* (Paris: Librarie Plon, 1958), 80–81. Legge recognizes the closeness of *3PS* to *4PS*b in particular; Mead simply observes that the change of subject between *2* and *3PS* may indicate that it does not directly follow. One of the reasons for assuming a direct connection is the shared title of *2/3PS* ("Extracts from the Books of the Savior"); however this is not a definite sign they were originally parts of the same work. The great differences in cosmology, views of the disciples' souls, and the disparity of opinions on the usefulness of the Books of Jeu all speak to *3PS* being separate from the preceding texts in the codex.

2 *1/2PS* also features a degree of question-and-answer formatting, but beyond the myth of Pistis Sophia, the focus is much more on Jesus describing the divine mysteries and their ordering with a minimum of disciple input.

3 C. Schmidt, believing the mysteries of the Books of Jeu refer to the baptisms, presents a proposal to reconcile these passages (*Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk*, 62–63). In his

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the two texts contain slightly different versions of the books' history, with *3PS* going into greater detail.

In addition to its concern with sins and their punishments, *3PS* deals extensively with the dissemination of the mysteries, repentance, and when it is or is not suitable to grant the mysteries to others. Furthermore, it discusses the formation of the human being, the components of which it consists, and how they are connected both in the body and after death. After the introduction, which consists of a list of sins to be renounced followed by a list of virtues to strive for, the questions and answers begin. They primarily relate to transgressions by those who have received some of the mysteries, and cases in which forgiveness is possible. The number and names of the punishment realms match those in *4PS*b, which are not found elsewhere. This text gives greater allowance than any of the others for redemption, for even those who are banished to the outer darkness have a hope of freedom if they have the proper knowledge, or if a believer performs mysteries on their behalf. This forgiveness is further illustrated by an episode in which Jesus tests Peter's mercifulness, commanding him to cut off a woman from the inheritance of the light because she had not acted in a worthy manner after receiving three baptisms. Peter pleads her case, suggesting that they give her the higher mysteries first, in case she should then repent, thus passing the test (*3PS* 110[310]). Clearly the author felt it important to offer as many chances as possible for redemption.

The complex relationships between the various parts of the human being also receive a great deal of attention, with no less than five elements from both the archons and the heights combined in a less than harmonious manner. The mysteries are necessary to be freed of the influence of the wicked "counterfeit spirit"[4] of the archons. As in *4PS*b, we find the notion that the Virgin of Light casts souls back into the world in bodies worthy of the sins they have committed if they do not receive the mysteries in life (*3PS* 111[285–286]); but for those that have received the proper mysteries, she gives them her seal and sends them on their way until they reach the place of the inheritance within or beyond the Treasury of Light. The somewhat more arbitrary allocation of souls in the world based on planetary positions is missing, however, in part due to the new, wholly negative view of fate as opposed to considering it an all-pervasive force with both positive and negative potential.

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view the baptisms are purification rites necessary for all and are outside the ranks of "higher" or "lower" mysteries that merely dictate the level to which a soul goes after death.

4 The phrase "ⲁⲛⲧⲓⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ ⲡⲛⲁ" has been translated in a variety of ways; although V. MacDermot gives "spirit counterpart," the present work will use the translation "counterfeit spirit." For more on this element, see Section 6.3.4.1.

The text thus deals with complicated issues of worthiness for the mysteries and protocol for their dispensation in what was becoming an increasingly proselytizing religion. Its intended audience is a group member who has not yet received the baptisms or mysteries, to highlight how one must live to be worthy of those mysteries. It has a dual role of instilling fear of being cut off from salvation for excessive transgressions, and giving hope that there are second chances if repentance is genuine. The outline of the components of the individual, with their antagonistic relationships to each other, attempts to explain the plight of humanity and its struggle with sin. The necessity of the mysteries found in the *Books of Jeu* for all people is specifically highlighted (*3PS* 134[349]), and the presentation of the proper seals and defenses during the ascent from the body, as described in the *Books of Jeu*, remains vital (*3PS* 112–113[289–293]). As the target audience is not yet worthy of the mysteries, they are not explicitly described; however it is clear that they remain the sole mode of salvation, despite the fact that they are not listed or outlined as in the earlier ritual preparatory texts or manuals.

2 Cosmology

2.1 *Spaces of the Ineffable*

These are the highest regions in both *3PS* and *1/2PS*, at the point in the textual tradition where the Ineffable and the First Mystery become the terms used to refer to the highest powers of the universe—previously the highest principle was referred to as either the "unapproachable" god or Jesus' Father, the father of all fatherhoods. These regions and their associated mysteries are also closely tied to the places of the inheritances (see Section 6.2.2).

They first appear as cryptic references to the mysteries of the first space without, and the mysteries of the second space of the First Mystery (*3PS* 105[266–267]). Later the text describes a soul that "has not listened to the counterfeit spirit in all his works, and becomes good and receives the mysteries of the light which are in the second space, or those which are in the third space which are within" (*3PS* 112[286]). Shortly thereafter there is some discussion of a soul that has received mysteries in the "first space without" (*3PS* 112[287]). In this instance, these spaces are not directly connected with the Ineffable or the First Mystery. However, in both cases the soul travels to the place of its inheritance (*3PS* 112[289]), or "to the place of its kingdom, as far as which it has received mysteries" (*3PS* 112[287]). The inheritances are not a single location; one's final destination is dependent upon which mysteries one received in life.

Later, Maria (likely Mary Magdalene) inquires about "the mysteries of these three spaces and the mysteries of this First Mystery and the mysteries of the Ineffable" (*3PS* 117[301–302]). The mysteries of the three spaces have the power to forgive all the sins a soul has committed to that point and afterward "up to the time as far as which each one of the mysteries will be powerful" (ϩεως ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲱ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲁⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ϣⲁⲣⲟⲩ). However, those of the Ineffable and First Mystery can forgive all the sins the soul commits, and further assure that no sin is reckoned to that soul until eternity. This demonstrates that mysteries have different levels of efficacy, with those of the two higher entities surpassing all others. Indeed, the mysteries of the First Mystery are less powerful than those of the Ineffable—despite the frequent connection of the two in discourse (*3PS* 105[269], 106[272], 109[277], 123[312]), it is only the mystery of the Ineffable that can save the truly damned transgressor (*3PS* 107[275], 118[304]). The true nature of the spaces and their mysteries will be discussed more fully in Ch. 7.

2.2 *The Treasury of Light*

The Treasury does not play a prominent role in *3PS*. The lack of attention given to it is a factor of both: 1) the text's primary focuses on a code of conduct and punishments for transgressions, regulations for passing on the mysteries and forgiving transgressors, and discussion of the formation of the human being and the functionality of baptisms; and 2) the introduction of new language for the highest realms, the inheritances/spaces of the First Mystery and the Ineffable. However, a number of its inhabitants do play important roles, reappearing after a hiatus in *4PS*b.

First, Jeu returns in his capacity as manager of the lower, material realms. Here he is called the "Overseer of the Light" and the "Envoy of the First Ordinance," reflecting his position of authority and ties to the light-realm. He also bears the title "First Man" in this section (*3PS* 111[285], 126[319], 130[329–330]), bringing to mind the idea of the Man-Son of Man connections in Sethian theology,[5] and thus a role of extreme preeminence in the overall hierarchy of divine emanations. One should note that the use of this terminology is not, however, identical to that found in the Sethian system, and that many of the characteristic features of the Sethian figure are lacking from the portrayal of Jeu.[6] The

5 See J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Québec: University of Laval Press, 2001), 78n.22.

6 Compare the description in A.D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says* (2007; revised edition London: Continuum, 2009), 105 and n.16.

presence of such terminology does not point to a direct adoption of Sethian ideas; however, the use of certain terminology and concepts loosely reflecting Sethian traditions in *4PS*b and *3PS*, without the polemical veil found in the other Jeuian texts, suggests that the presence of this title may reflect some modicum of outside influence.

Jeu's position of power over the lower regions is represented as he commands angels to watch over the archons of the dragon of the outer darkness. These angels take up those souls imprisoned within the torments of the dragon who know one of the twelve mystery-names of the archons of the dragon and deliver them to Jeu, who then examines the souls to see if they have "completed their cycles" in the world (*3PS* 130[329–330]). It should be noted that this is the only instance where the Virgin of Light, "the judge (ⲕⲣⲓⲧⲏⲥ)," [7] is bypassed for a soul: Jeu shows mercy to souls that are spared from the outer darkness through this mystery but which have completed their cycles in the world and sends them to the seven virgins of the light. These beings then baptize them and set them aside for purification, sparing them from destruction (*3PS* 130[330]). This appears to give Jeu a unique power of clemency apart from that of the Virgin of Light that is not found elsewhere in the texts. At any rate, here Jeu is obviously important in the divine realm and plays a role in relation both to the wicked punishment realms and to human souls. Unlike in *4PS*a and the later texts, his relationship to Jesus is not specified; the formation of Jesus' earthly incarnation, in which context this relationship is relevant, is not obviously a part of the tradition of *3PS*.

The second key figure to return to prominence here is Melchisedek. Previously called either "Zorokothora" or "Zorokothora Melchisedek," in *3PS* the name "Zorokothora" drops out of use. The subordinates of Melchisedek appear delivering the souls of those sinners for whom believers pray from the judgments of archons and the dragon of the outer darkness, and bringing them to the Virgin of Light for examination (*3PS* 128[324–325], 129[326]). Melchisedek himself is said to take the purified bits of light from the work of the archons (*3PS* 131[333–334]), and he is further listed among those who seal the souls which have become good and received mysteries, along with the Virgin of Light and the Great Sabaoth the Good (*3PS* 112[290–291]). It should be noted that in this list of high beings the name of Jeu is not found. The subordinates of both Jeu and Melchisedek retrieve certain souls from the damnation of the outer dark-

7 She is referenced with this title a few times in *3PS*; see 111[285], 113[294]. Although she functions as judge elsewhere, the only other place where this title appears is in the fire baptismal rite of *2 Jeu* (B25(63),26–B26(64),32).

ness; however, there are two modes by which one might be released, and each is assigned to one of the types. Jeu takes the ones who free themselves with their own knowledge, while Melchisedek handles those who are freed through the prayers and actions of living believers. The tasks of Jeu and Melchisedek, the two great lights, seem to be largely equal in prestige or divine hierarchy, but separate. Jeu and his subordinates maintain the order of the archontic beings and aeons, and Melchisedek with his receivers transport purified light from the work of the archons and souls of men for sealing and transference into the Treasury of Light.

It is clear that the Treasury of Light is important for the role its leaders play in granting suffering souls clemency from their punishments, if the proper conditions are met. The Treasury here furthermore plays a role as the resting place for souls that have completed their cycles in the world, having been rescued from the dragon of the outer darkness. These souls are not allowed back into the world and have not received the mysteries of the light or the sign of the Ineffable, but their examiner—the Virgin of Light or Jeu—has mercy on them, giving them the baptism of the seven virgins, purifying them, and ultimately setting them in the last rank of the Treasury, saving them from punishment (*3PS* 128[325], 130[330–331]). Its other explicit appearance is in a discussion of the fate of the soul that has received the mysteries to free it from the counterfeit spirit and destiny: after that soul presents all the appropriate seals of the places of light, "all those of the place of the Treasury of Light seal it with their seals, and it goes to the place of the inheritance" (*3PS* 112[291]). At each of the preceding stages of the soul's journey, when it moves from one place to another the text explains that the receivers of the light take it to the next location—but here once the final seals are received, there is no escort to the place of the inheritance. It seems possible that the place of the inheritance(s) is simply another term for the Treasury of Light, or some region within it.[8]

2.3 *Place of the Right*

There are only two references to the place of the right in *3PS*, both times in close proximity to the rare mentions of the Treasury of Light. The first comes in the description of the path of a soul that has received the mystery to release the seals of the counterfeit spirit. After a lengthy account of performing the mystery and moving upwards, it eventually reaches the Great Sabaoth the Good, who is "above the gate of life in the place of the right." The soul gives him praise,

8 See also *2 Jeu* B21(59),7–8, B34(72),27–30, where the rank of the (places of) the inheritance is closely associated with the Treasury of Light.

and receives his seals. It then gives its knowledge of the whole place of those of the right, receiving their seals, before the receivers of Melchisedek—who is also specified as being in the place of those of the right—take it to the Treasury of Light (*3PS* 112[291]). Here there is still no definite separation between the Treasury and the place of the right. The beings that have heretofore been associated with the place of the right, identified as the Treasury, have remained tied to it, and Melchisedek in particular continues to act within the realm of the Treasury as a being of the place of those of the right.

The second reference is in an explanation of the fate of the soul of an unrepentant sinner for whom a believer on earth prays. After being rescued from its punishments, it is either sent back to earth in a righteous body, or if it has completed its cycles on earth, it is baptized and placed in "the last rank of the light until the ascension of all the perfect souls. And when they prepare to draw the veils of the place of those of the right, they cleanse that soul once more and purify it, and place it in the ranks of the first savior who is in the Treasury of the Light" (*3PS* 128[325]). It is similar to the notion in *4PS*a, where the "baptism of those of the right" is the last hurdle to cross before entering the Treasury proper. It is likely that it is along the same lines as the earlier texts, with the Treasury as a whole comprising the place of "those of the right."

The lack of attention given to the place of (those of) the right parallels the same phenomenon in this book with the Treasury, showing the author's lack of interest in these higher realms in comparison to those of punishment and other anthroponomical concerns. Although it is not entirely clear whether at this point the place of the right was considered as a separate entity from the Treasury, or still as a region of or another name for it, indications in the text suggest that the latter is more likely.

2.4 *The* ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ

In *3PS*, there is only one explicit reference to the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ: in a discussion of the fate of souls rescued from the dragon of the outer darkness by virtue of a believer performing the mystery of the Ineffable on his or her behalf, the text states that the receivers of Melchisedek "will snatch [that soul] up from all the places in which it is. And they will take it to the place of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ to the presence of the Virgin of the Light" (*3PS* 128[324–325]). Although the name of the region is only referenced once, its resident, the Virgin of Light, appears with some frequency, demonstrating that the region is still quite important for the topics being discussed. The Virgin of Light continues her vital role as judge, inspecting souls to see whether they have received the mysteries to be allowed access to the higher realms, and if not, determining based on the life they led what type of body they deserve for their next reincarnation. Although she sets the

type of body a soul is to receive, the planetary or astral determinism found in *4PS*b is gone or muted; one can be cast almost immediately—"in that very month"—back into the world and receive the appropriate body based purely on her decisions (*3PS* 108[276], 128[324–325]), rather than having to wait for a particular planetary configuration before returning the soul into the world.

The archons of the great Heimarmene are said to be in the places of the head of the aeons called the kingdom of Adamas, which is "in the presence of the Virgin of Light" (*3PS* 131[333]), placing the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ directly on the border of the Heimarmene, the twelve aeons or the zodiacal sphere. It is also the origin of the light of the sun (*3PS* 103[263], 111[285]), furthering the association of the Virgin of Light and the sun implied in previous texts, despite the elimination of a positive role for astrology and planetary-solar relations. The upper border of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is the gate of life in the place of the right (*3PS* 112[290–291]), firmly establishing its continued position as a midpoint between the upper and lower realms—although the thirteenth aeon is absent from the equation.

2.5 *Evidence for the Exclusion of the Thirteenth Aeon*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the tradition to which *4PS*b and *3PS* belong does not include the thirteenth aeon. It is important to establish the evidence that it explicitly does *not* exist here, as opposed to simply going unmentioned, to bolster the argument that this text is clearly distinct from *1/2PS*—which features the thirteenth aeon prominently.

In *3PS*, there are references to neither the thirteenth aeon itself nor its inhabitants. The lone possible exception to this is the discussion of one of the "great triple powers" who rescues righteous souls that did not receive the mysteries and brings them into the presence of the Virgin of Light (*3PS* 103[262–263]), as presented in the previous chapter. The dwelling place of this being is not mentioned, but as has been shown, actively positive beings are not associated with the thirteenth aeon (with the single exception of the Pistis Sophia) and are not permitted to move above and beyond their realm. This tradition seems closer to that of *2 Jeu*, wherein the triple-powered gods are inhabitants of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, here modified for the new role of the realm as a place of judgment and potential salvation.

One might argue that the nature of the text focuses on other aspects and does not require mention of this region; however, the Heimarmene and its archons are discussed with frequency, and as noted above, the "place of the kingdom of Adamas" (the twelve aeons or Heimarmene) is said to be "in the presence of the Virgin of the Light" (the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), with no intervening area (*3PS* 131[333]). It would seem that in this tradition, the thirteenth aeon is absent. That the invisible god, the Barbelo, and all of the invisible emanations elsewhere associated with the

thirteenth aeon are missing raises further suspicion. The strand of tradition found in this text and *4PS*b lacks the Sethian polemic found in the other Jeuian texts, and the thirteenth aeon often features most prominently as a vehicle for demoting the highest Sethian figures to mere material archons. It is possible that the thirteenth aeon is omitted because to these authors it served little purpose outside of a polemical context. The theology of this text and *4PS*b furthermore do not include the concept of Jesus' body being derived in part from it (as is the case in *4PS*a and *1PS*), and Adamas is the head of evil rather than the triple-power Authades (as in the myth of *1/2PS*), effectively erasing the necessity of this realm.

2.6 *The Aeons/Heimarmene*

The *4PS*b focus on the relationship between the aeons of the sphere and the fate of the soul cast into a material body is continued in the connected *3PS*. Rather than the terms "sphere" or "twelve aeons," here the Heimarmene "in the places of the head of the aeons" fills the role of the seat of fate. As noted above, this region is home to a being called Adamas—without the name Sabaoth attached, as in previous texts. This practice of streamlining names is seen elsewhere in these texts, such as the reduction of "Zorokothora Melchisedek" to simply Melchisedek discussed above. In this case simplifying the name could also be an effort to reduce stigma and confusion associated with the identifier "Sabaoth," given the positive role the figure called the Great Sabaoth the Good plays. Little is said about Adamas and his own role: the soul that received the mysteries before death presents his archons or tyrants with seals and defenses for safe passage in its ascent (*3PS* 112[290], 113[292]), the realm of the Heimarmene is called his kingdom, and he gives the ancient soul that is to be reincarnated in the world the cup of forgetfulness.[9] The implications are consistent with his past representations: he is involved with fate, now as its head, and he works to keep souls ignorant of the mysteries, mired in the material realm and process of transmigration.

The five planets—excluding the sun and moon from the traditional seven—are now simply referred to as the five great archons of the Heimarmene, and any traces of a positive nature associated with them are gone. The entire role of the Heimarmene and its archons is to bind the soul to the counterfeit spirit that compels men to sin, and to set the time and manner of death.[10] When one

9 In contrast to *4PS*b, where one of his receivers does this, here he appears to give the soul the cup himself: "ϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲉⲱⲱϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲉⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲕⲉⲫⲁⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲓⲱⲛ · ϣⲁϥⲟⲩⲱϣ̄ⲛ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲡⲟⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲃϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲁⲕⲓⲁ …" (*3PS* 131[334])

10 On the counterfeit spirit and its relationship to the myth of *ApJohn*, see Section 6.3.4.1.

recites the mysteries to release the bonds of the archons of the Heimarmene in their presence, one is then freed of the counterfeit spirit, and can enter the Kingdom of Light. The Savior came to the world to impart these mysteries, "For without mysteries no one will go to the Kingdom of the Light, either righteous or sinners" (*3PS* 133[346]). It is primarily the archons of the Heimarmene—and by virtue of being their king, the Adamas—who are responsible for sins and fate, but purely righteous living is not sufficient for salvation. Reincarnation is still a possibility for one to have a second chance to receive the mysteries, but with the demonization of the planets, a positive reincarnation is now entirely dependent upon the judgment of the Virgin of Light.

2.7 *Amente and the Chaos*

These two regions have largely been discussed in the last chapter, and little is added to their descriptions or roles in *3PS*. They maintain their respective positions in terms of cosmological ordering and the seriousness of their punishments. However, a few points deserve mention here.

Although the Amente is clearly present in parts of the text as the lowest or mildest level of punishment,[11] it is also strikingly absent in certain passages. Even for the soul that lived righteously but did not receive the mysteries, which in *4PS*b was taken around the world, then to observe Amente, and then to the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ before being presented to the Virgin of Light (*4PS*b 147[382]), in *3PS* the Amente stop is replaced by a visit to the Chaos (*3PS* 103[263]). Other examples of soul-journeys in this text also exclude Amente while including the Chaos and the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ. There is one reference to a soul being brought to "Amente of the Chaos" (ⲁⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϧⲁⲟⲥ; *3PS* 111[284]) for punishment; however as the passage continues referring only to the Chaos, this apparently refers to the western region of the Chaos and not to the discrete region "Amente."

The fact that this region is explicitly included in some passages—particularly in lists of sins or regions and their relative severity—but deliberately *excluded* in other sections where one would expect to find it might suggest that this text was compiled from multiple sources or using multiple traditions. Certainly Amente was not the most vital realm of the Jeuian underworld, found only in the strand of tradition embodied in *4PS*b and *3PS*. It is conceivable that at the time *3PS* was composed, multiple sources discussing sins and the journey of the soul would have been available, some including this region and others

11 The opening of *3PS* gives a long list of sins and the regions in which they are punishable, beginning with Amente as the mildest; see also the explicit order of the punishment realms and their relative harshness given at *3PS* 127[321–322].

excluding it. The Chaos was important for a longer period, associated as it was with Jaldabaoth and his minions, as well as its role in the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and restoration.

2.8 *The* мнтє

In contrast to Amente, which appears in the opening list of sins and punishment realms that occupies several pages at the beginning of *3PS* but rarely elsewhere, the мнтє is overlooked in this opening section. Furthermore, the planetary ties it had in *1 Jeu* and partially possessed in *4PS*a are now completely eradicated: while in *4PS*a there were two sets of "five great archons," one set representing the planets ruling over the aeons with mixed traits (*4PS*a 137[356–357]), and one set ruling over the мнтє with strictly wicked traits, imparting humans with evil impulses (*4PS*a 139–140[359–366]), as established above, there is now only one set of wicked "five great archons," and these exist in the Heimarmene representing the planets. Judgment is associated with the мнтє (*3PS* 103[263], 111[285], 127[321]), but judgment also is connected with all of the punishment realms in this text. It is connected to destiny, but it is unclear whether it is the beings of the мнтє or those of the Heimarmene that bind the destiny to the soul.[12] This confusion could be a remnant of moving the planetary aspects from the мнтє to the Heimarmene. The only clear trace of its earlier position is one reference to Jacthanabas (*3PS* 103[263])—but even this is phrased in such a way that he could be located beyond the мнтє, as a soul is taken to his place *after* being taken to the way of the мнтє. Jacthanabas, as the final archon of the мнтє in *4PS*a 140[365–366] and the "successor of the archon of the outer darkness" in the related *BC Frag 2* (E1(88),18–20), clearly had ties with the outer darkness, and it may be that he is referred to in the capacity of a border-guard between the two regions.

Despite all of the ambiguity in the origin or nature of the мнтє, and perhaps as a holdover from its previous role, its position as a fearful destination is still strong in *3PS*. Its fire is nine times fiercer than that of Chaos, and is surpassed in fierceness only by the dragon of the outer darkness (*3PS* 127[322]). It is possible that this increased ambiguity of its role, with its past connections to the planets or the sublunar regions stripped away, is part of the reason this region does not appear in the later texts. Without a clear cosmological placement or role beyond that of a pure punishment realm, and in texts without the obsession with sins and their proper punishments, it is made redundant and falls out of use.

12 *3PS* 112[287] suggests it is the мнтє, but *3PS* 132[341] is less clear.

2.9 *The Outer Darkness*

The outer darkness sees its greatest developments in *3PS*. Here it is described in great detail:

> The outer darkness is a great dragon whose tail is in its mouth, and it is outside the whole world, and it surrounds the whole world. And there is a great number of places of judgment within it, and it has twelve chambers of severe punishments, and an archon is in every chamber and the faces of the archons are different from one another.
>
> *3PS* 126[317]

After describing the archons in each of the chambers, it goes on to explain,

> … each of them has a name according to the hour. And each one of them changes his face according to the hour. And furthermore, to each of these twelve chambers, there is a door opening to the height … And there is an angel of the height watching at each of the doors of the chambers, whom Jeu … has placed to keep watch over the dragon, so that it does not rebel, together with all the archons of its chambers which are within it.
>
> *3PS* 126[319]

Although there is only one entry point, the "mouth of the tail" (ⲧⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲧ) of the dragon (*3PS* 127[320]), there are several escape points: each of the twelve chamber doors can be opened if a soul within it recites the name of one of the archons: "at the time when they shall say it, the whole dragon will be shaken and will be exceedingly agitated. And the door of the chamber in which are the souls of those men opens upwards" (*3PS* 130[329]). Indeed, although the names of the archons are always changing with the hours, "the twelve [names] are within one another, so that he who says one of the names says all of the names" (*3PS* 127[320]). This is a startling development in light of the conviction elsewhere that the outer darkness is the one place from which there is no hope of escape. Furthermore, a soul can also be freed if one of the living performs the mystery of the Ineffable and prays for that soul (*3PS* 128[323]). Thus, despite the fact that the fires and judgments within it are "seventy times fiercer" than those of the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ (*3PS* 127[322]), it is not the completely hopeless pit of destruction for souls it was previously.

The outer darkness surrounds the world, with the light of the sun covering the dragon's darkness by day (*3PS* 131[332]). At night, however, its darkness enters the world as smoke, so close to this world that it can almost be touched. This suggests its location in the sublunar realm, elsewhere associated with

terrifying abysses, fallenness and materiality.[13] However, like Amente, it is not included as a realm on the initial journey of the soul on the way to its judgment. It remains reserved for the worst sins—despite the potentials for escape and another chance for the soul that this text posits.

There are two lists of sins that are worthy of punishment in the outer darkness found in this text. The first, found in the opening section after lists of sins earning one punishment in the Amente or Chaos, consists of:

- killing
- mercilessness
- impiety
- godlessness
- sorceries
- blasphemy
- accepting erroneous teachings
- teaching erroneous teachings
- abandoning the teachings of the First Mystery

3PS 102[259]

The second occurs as a "reassurance" to the disciples, after the description of the dragon and its contents, that the only souls sent there are those of these particular types of sinners:

- murderers
- poisoners
- the impious
- the godless
- slanderers
- defiled men
- pederasts
- adulterers
- those who are in erroneous teachings
- those who teach errors

3PS 127[320]

Although there are some differences between the two groups, there is a great deal of overlap. Primarily, the second group adds sexual sins as being worthy of the outer darkness, while overall the focus is on those sins that dishonor god or result in human death. Interestingly, the first section allots the sins of slander and adultery to the realm of Chaos, suggesting the use of two sources from different authors who considered the weight of these sins differently.

13 As a point of interest, there are a number of references to souls in the midst (ⲙⲓⲧⲉ) of the dragon (*3PS* 130[327], 130[329]). While this may simply refer to the space within the dragon, given the connection between the ⲙⲓⲧⲉ and the outer darkness in previous texts, it is possible that the specific region of the ⲙⲓⲧⲉ is here being associated with the dragon. Considering the dragon's proximity to earth, and the earlier ties between the ⲙⲓⲧⲉ and the sublunar realms, this may be more than a simple turn of phrase.

2.10 3PS—*Cosmology Summary*

As noted elsewhere, this text has its closest ties to *4PS*b, and largely shares the same basic cosmological structure—but without the latter's more Hellenistic notions of the planets' names and variable natures. The First Mystery with its spaces makes its debut as a high entity almost on par with the Ineffable one. The ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ maintains its role as a place of judgment and middle ground between the regions of right and left. The planets have been homogenized into simply the "five great archons of the great Heimarmene," and the Heimarmene/aeons play a great role in the formation of human beings, orchestrating their composition and fate. It is possible that the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ also plays a role in this, a throwback to its previous position relating to the planets and destiny. The underworld still consists of Amente, the Chaos, the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, and the outer darkness, although there are signs that multiple sources were used that sometimes excluded certain of these realms; great effort is expended to delineate the types of sins that would merit time in each. The outer darkness in particular is elaborated here, but its frightfulness as the final pit of destruction for the most wicked of souls is lessened by the introduction of a number of possibilities for escape. This, combined with the text's regular refrain about the all-forgiving nature of the mystery of the Ineffable, highlights an unwillingness to abandon anyone eternally, regardless of the sin.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Interaction with Egyptian Thought*

3.1.1 Ouroboros

Although the *ouroboros* appears briefly with a positive nature in *4PS*a, being associated with the disc of the sun and closely tied to the boat of the moon, in *3PS* it appears as a wholly evil entity: the dragon of the outer darkness with its tail in its mouth, trapping sinners within its inner chambers. This development ties it closer with the evil serpent Apep, Ra's mortal enemy who needed to be overcome every night, and with Ankh-Neteru, as an *ouroboros* with underworld symbolism through whom Ra traveled in his nightly journey.[14] This latter association is furthered by the twelve beings living within its twelve chambers with names that change "according to the hour" (*3PS* 126[319]). In

14 B. Mundkur, *The Cult of the Serpent: An Interdisciplinary Survey of its Manifestations and Origins* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 76; E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Am-Tuat*, (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1905), 259–261.

Ra's journey through the underworld, he visits a different chamber in each of the twelve hours of the night. The fact that in *3PS* the dragon is said to be visible while the sun is beneath the world reflects both the physical world-encompassing nature of the dragon as well as the sun's journey in relation to it (*3PS* 131[332]).

Furthermore, the sinners are taken into the dragon "through the mouth of the tail" (сенаχιτογ евол ϩⲛ ⲧⲧаπро ⲛ̄πсат; *3PS* 127[320])—not simply swallowed through the jaws as one might expect. This reflects Ra's mode of entry into the serpent in the *Amduat*, where he enters through the tail and exits through the mouth.[15] *3PS* suggests that souls exit through the mouth of the dragon if they receive a second chance by virtue of a prayer or ritual performed on their behalf by one still living, furthering this connection (*3PS* 128[324]). The additional exits within each chamber found in *3PS*, however, appear to be an original innovation. This perhaps balances the fact that, unlike in more typical Egyptian tradition, no light or rejuvenation ever reaches those within its chambers; it is purely a place of punishment rather than an accepted destination for souls within the underworld. By providing an "emergency exit" for those with the correct knowledge, it gives a possibility of a second chance in what is otherwise a sentence for complete destruction.

3.1.2 Decans & Astrology

The potential use of Egyptian decans in the aeons of *2 Jeu*, and the explicit reference in *4PS*a to "decans" bound within the Heimarmene-sphere, or the sphere of fixed stars, have been discussed in previous chapters. These examples allow for the Egyptian interpretation of the decans as starry gods tied into the workings of fate. *3PS* furthers these fate-ties in the two instances the decans arise: they are said to "form the soul in the bodies of the soul in the world (ⲛⲁϊ ⲉⲱⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲣⲱⲃ ⲉⲧⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲣⲣⲁϊ ϩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ϩⲛ ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ)" (*3PS* 131[336]); they are also involved in the formation of the fetus in the womb, along with the archons of the Heimarmene (zodiac) and the 365 ministers (day-keepers), suggesting again that the decans have their role in the starry sphere and prison of time and fate (*3PS* 132[342–343]).[16]

Further along this line of fetus-formation by the decans and ministers, it is specified that the time required to form "the whole body with all its members" within the womb is 70 days (*3PS* 132[343])—the same time allotted for the

15 E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Am-Tuat*, 261; referred to in J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, D. Lorton, trans. (London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 183.

16 The ministers also seal the fetus with multiple significant dates in its formation, the astrological significance of which will be discussed below, Section 6.3.2.

embalming of the dead in Egyptian practice, which as noted in Section 1.3.1.2 was tied with the cycle of the star Sothis. With the negative view of the physical body held by the author at this point, this connection between the formation of the human body and the embalming of the dead is unlikely to be a coincidence. The formation of the body from the sweat, tears, and breath of the archons also has parallels in the Egyptian system, wherein the gods and humanity are formed from the sweat and tears of a higher being (*3PS* 131[333–334]).[17]

3.1.3 Other Imagery

While the Egyptian afterlife destination Amente—the West—has been twisted into a place of punishment throughout these texts,[18] in *3PS* it is also home to the "dog-face" who deals with judgments of the sinners there. This dog-face is likely to be a version of Anubis, who was portrayed with the head of a jackal and was featured as a key figure in Egyptian judgment scenes.[19] The other animal-headed beings that dwell within the dragon of the outer darkness would also seem to reflect the Egyptian iconographic tradition;[20] while originally animal-headed imagery represented positive gods and guardians as well as evil beings, here they have become purely demonic entities in charge of punishments and destined for destruction.

3.2 *Astrology*

As noted above, while *4PS*a features two sets of five great archons—the planets with mixed natures in the aeons, and one with strictly wicked natures in

17 L. Kákosy, "Gnosis und ägyptische Religion," 245–246, in *Le Origini Dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 Aprile 1966*, U. Bianchi, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 238–247.

18 This association of Amente with hell or a realm of punishment was a part of Coptic Christianity in general; see R.K. Ritner, "Egypt under Roman Rule: the legacy of Ancient Egypt," 21, in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1: *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517*, C.F. Petry, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–33.

19 It should be noted that the Ariel found in Amente in *4PS*b and *3PS* is not Jaldabaoth, despite the connection of the two figures in texts such as *OrigWorld*. In the *Pistis Sophia* Jaldabaoth is associated exclusively with the Chaos region and has a lion face, while Ariel is tied to Amente and the dog-faced entity there.

20 P.D. Scott-Moncrieff observes that the animals chosen do not entirely match up with those used in ancient Egyptian sources, and takes this as a sign that the sources being used by the author were hopelessly corrupt (*Paganism and Christianity in Egypt* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913], 178–179). One must keep in mind that these texts originated well after the ancient forms of Egyptian religion had faded with time, and also that this group was open to updating imagery. Despite the differences, an Egyptian origin seems certain.

the way of the Midst (ⲙⲏⲧⲉ)—in *3PS* they are reduced to a single set of wicked entities representing the planets in the Heimarmene, the zodiacal sphere of fate. This is a logical shift given that this author had no place for the traditional Hellenistic planetary natures, instead viewing all astrological phenomena as negative; it was only fitting that the entities which drive men to sin and are five in number should be the five non-luminary planets.[21] The neutral Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), despite its association with the light of the sun, is still located above the aeons/Heimarmene.[22] Thus the two Midsts, the regions terminologically most likely to be associated with the ecliptic and/or the planets, further develop astronomically ambiguous (and increasingly morally polarized) statuses, divorced from direct connection with the celestial entities.

As noted above, the more typical Hellenistic planet representations—along with their association with the Virgin of Light in *4PS*b—are absent here, suggesting that they, too, have been phased out. It is the Virgin of Light alone who decides the fate of souls brought before her—here almost exclusively in positive or at least just terms, in opposition to the passage in *4PS*b that condemned all souls born while the maleficent planets were in her presence. The five planetary archons now play an active but wholly negative role in the formation of the human being, each placing its part in the soul.[23] Furthermore the 365 "ministers" of the archons of the aeons carry the intangible elements of the human being into the womb and go about forming the being's members (*3PS* 132[340–343]), further tying the body to the solar year and the machinations of the zodiacal archons. A number of significant dates are "sealed" onto the child's body in the womb, including the day the soul came forth from the archons as well as the time the birth should occur (*3PS* 132[343–345]). Ancient astrological theory considered the date of conception to be as or more important than the date of birth in determining a person's horoscope (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* III.1).

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21 The fully negative interpretation of the planets in Manichaeism should also be considered.

22 "… ⲛ̅ⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲛⲟⲟ⸗ ⲛ̅ⲓⲙⲁⲣⲙⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲣⲏⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲕⲉⲫⲁⲗⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲁⲓⲱⲛ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲱⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲩ ⲭⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲇⲁⲙⲁⲥ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲩ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲧⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲓ̈ⲛ …" (*3PS* 131[332–333]) There is a more explicit distinction between the aeons and the "way of the light of the sun" where the Virgin of Light dwells at *3PS* 103[263] (see also 111[285]). Based on the position of this neutral Midst in both earlier (*2 Jeu*) and later (*1/2PS*) texts, and the fact that in these texts it always refers to a region independent of the planets, it seems likely that the phrase "in the presence of" suggests a border between the region of the archons and that of the Virgin of Light, which places that of the Virgin on a higher level.

23 The sun and moon also play a part; however, they maintain an ambiguous status—they are only discussed in connection with breathing a higher, positive power into the soul. See *3PS* 131[334–336].

Evidence for more concrete astronomical influence appears at *3PS* 134[349], when Jesus describes the placement of the Books of Jeu after Enoch copied them, so they might be protected from the Flood. Jesus says, "I caused him to place them in the rock of Ararad, and I placed the archon Kalapatauroth, which is over Skemmut, upon whose head are the feet of Jeu, and who goes round all the aeons and the Heimarmene …" Ararad (or Ararat) is known from Gen. 8:4 as the location where Noah's ark finally came to rest, tying it to the flood narrative—however, the fact that this is the only place in the whole of the *Pistis Sophia* with a possible allusion to Genesis suggests that this detail was likely obtained from another source.[24] Relevant here, rather, is the information regarding the archon charged with guarding the books. Skemmut (ϭⲙⲙⲟⲩⲧ) is a constellation in Egyptian, possibly the Pleiades.[25] The Pleiades were also associated with the Flood in Jewish lore.[26] Furthermore, the Pleiades are located in the constellation of Taurus; one might observe that the latter part of the name of the archon that is "over" (ϩⲓⲭⲛ̄) Skemmut, "Kalapatauroth" (ⲕⲁⲗⲁⲡⲁⲧⲁⲩⲣⲱⲑ), bears some resemblance to the Greek constellation name. It is possible this is not coincidental, and some remnant of positive celestial guardianship is here preserved. In any case, clearly some form of astronomical mythology is at work. Immediately prior to this passage, it states that correct knowledge of "the establishment of the air and the heaven and the cycles and the stars and the luminaries and the earth and all things within it" (*3PS* 134[349]) is necessary to be recognized as a teacher of truth. The connections to Enoch—who was also thought to have received astronomical wisdom (*1 En* 72–82; *2 En* 1–48)—may further reflect this astronomical concern. If the "Books of Jeu" of the Bruce Codex are those mentioned here in the *Pistis Sophia* (or if they are not identical but closely related), then the "mysteries" they contain are likely to relate to astronomical content, in the form of the ascent of the soul through the heavens—which Chs. 1 and 2 have already presented as their main concern.

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24 On certain Gnostics' use of the idea of a sacred mountain to deposit ancient texts, see G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 115–116. *2 Enoch* also refers to Ararat, and there is some evidence of Jeuian familiarity with Enochic tradition (see F.I. Andersen, trans., *2* [*Slavonic Apocalypse of*] *Enoch*, 212, in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983], 91–221).

25 See W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 821.

26 F.C. Burkitt, "Pistis Sophia," 271, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 23 (1922), 271–280; E.W. Maunder, *The Astronomy of the Bible* (1908; reprint: Wildside Press LLC, 2007) 222–223; in the Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth*, folio 59a.

Beyond this section of apparently positive astronomical mythology, in *3PS* we have the beginning of fate's spiral into becoming a purely negative entity, weak before the mysteries and powers of the true light. Previously it was viewed as something unavoidable, and could potentially have positive as well as negative effects. Now the full brunt of a malevolent conception of the stars is in place, and although knowledge of the motions of the heavens was considered important, the particular faith and ritual tenets of the Jeuians were necessary for hope in the afterlife. While at this point fate itself is still at full power and controls all aspects of the outsider's birth, life, and death, this state changes quickly in the following texts.

3.3 *Interaction with Manichaeans*

3.3.1 Light Purification

In the Manichaean myth there are two accounts of light being unwillingly extracted from the sons of darkness and archons before the creation of the world: the Living Spirit appears before the sons of darkness, causing them to vomit part of their light; and the Third Messenger with the Virgin of Light appear before the archons, causing them to ejaculate part of theirs in lust. In each case, the divine being takes what is pure of their light and the remaining mixture goes into the formation of the world. Furthermore, the *Shabuhragan* explains that the being Âz taught lust to the demons, who produced misbirths, which Âz in turn devoured through the male and female demons it had formed as garments for itself. The male and female demons of Âz then mingle and produce Adam, who possesses most of the light power that had been consumed through the misbirths of the earlier demons (*Shabuhragan* M 7984.1; 7982).[27] Thus goes the story of the creation of the first human.

The elements of 1) purified light being taken directly from the archons and transported to the light-realm while yet-to-be purified mixture goes into the world, 2) the development of the human being and the soul from that mixture, and 3) the archons consuming their own matter all play roles in the *Pistis Sophia*, although in different contexts. The archons consuming their own matter appears later in *1PS*. The boat of the moon stealing (ⲧⲱⲣⲡ̄) the light of the archons in *4PS*a has already been discussed, minus the bodily imagery of vomit or semen. In *3PS*, the light that is purified within the archons is taken away by Melchisedek, but the remainder goes into a soul which then has the opportunity for purification in the world. This new soul is formed either from "the sweat of the archons, and from the tears of their eyes, or else

27 See P.O. Skjærvø, *An Introduction to Manicheism II—Texts*, 34.

from the breath of their mouths"—in other words, the unpurified mixture of the archons,[28] or it is made from the dregs of what is purified of their light (*3PS* 131[333–334]). A more in-depth description of the formation of the whole human being comes in *3PS* 132[340–345], but there is no description of the creation of Adam or the first man. Rather, the production of any human being is explained, with the system of reincarnation already in place; and it is through this system that the soul has opportunities to purify the dregs from which it derives. The themes of purification of light in the archons, that power being taken by a representative of the light realm, and the remaining dregs going into the world for further purification through humans living properly, are thus common to both the Manichaean and Jeuian traditions, despite the vehicles and specific imagery being different.

3.4 *Interaction with Sethians*

It has been observed that from an early point, the Jeuian texts contain apparent polemic against the Sethians, primarily by denigrating their most important mythological figures into unimportant side-players in the material realms. However, *4PS*b lacked references of this type, including one of the triple-powered ones as a relatively positive figure, and featuring Jaldabaoth with a position very similar to his original one in certain Sethian or related texts. *3PS*, which belongs to the same line of tradition as *4PS*b, continues this trend. The only figures with probable Sethian ties appear briefly and with little description, but they are the same two that *4PS*b features—the single positive, or "great," triple-powered one (*3PS* 103[262]), and Jaldabaoth, fulfilling the same role as the head of the Chaos punishment realm (*3PS* 102[258–259]). *3PS* takes this trend further, however, adopting certain motifs known from Sethian sources in its theory of the soul's formation and journey without obvious polemic—certainly modifying them as necessary, but including them without implied insult.

3.4.1 Components of the Human in *3PS*

The main evidence of influence from Sethian traditions likely derives primarily from the core Sethian text *Apocryphon of John*, and relates to the construction of the human being that appears quite strikingly in *3PS* alone. Prior to *3PS*, the soul is the only element apparently present in the human being. While in both

28 Note that this may also reflect Egyptian roots; in Egyptian tradition gods and humanity were formed from the sweat and tears of a higher being. See L. Kákosy, "Gnosis und ägyptische Religion," 245–246, in *Le Origini Dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 Aprile 1966*, U. Bianchi, ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 238–247.

*4PS*a and b there is much discussion of human souls being punished and cast back into the world according to their sins, in *3PS* the term "counterfeit spirit" (ⲁⲛⲧⲓⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ ⲡⲛⲁ) appears as a catalyst of sin,[29] in conjunction with the term "power" representing an element from the realm of Light. These terms are key in the theory of humanity's formation and struggle in *ApJohn*, and although there are strong differences in their nature and mythological background in *3PS*, their appearance and the way they are used suggests familiarity with some version of this text.[30]

The term ⲁⲛⲧⲓⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ ⲡⲛⲁ is used in the short recension of *ApJohn* (with alternate Coptic terms for ἀντίμιμον in the long recension). It derives from the wicked archons, formed out of their memory of the true spirit that had descended, and drives men to desire and intercourse. The power (ϭⲟⲙ in BG, ⲇⲩⲛⲁⲙⲓⲥ in II/III) and soul appear to be interchangeable terms (*ApJohn* III 34,13–14; BG 67,12; however in the long recension it is separate from the soul, II 26,16–17). Every man possesses it, for without it, one would be unable to stand (*ApJohn* III 34,7; BG 67,4–7; II 26,12–14). Either the spirit or counterfeit spirit is then drawn into the person, making him strong in the former case and leading him astray in the latter (*ApJohn* III 34,10–18; BG 67,7–18; II 26,15–22). The one the spirit enters will be saved and find repose, while the one the counterfeit spirit enters will be reincarnated until they acquire knowledge. Furthermore, the long recension refers to the Chief Ruler making certain beings coming into the world drink of the "water of forgetfulness" (ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲃⲱϩ) so that they would not know their origin (*ApJohn* II 25,7; IV 39,4–5).

In *3PS*, the basic components that form each human are the power (ϭⲟⲙ) which derives from the Savior, without which the soul cannot stand (*3PS* 131[336–337]); the soul that is outside the power, formed from the dregs of the matter of the archons (*3PS* 131[334]); and the counterfeit spirit that is outside both of these, formed from the cup of water of forgetfulness (ⲡⲁⲡⲟⲧ ⲙⲙⲟⲩⲛⲃⲱϩ;

29 In *4PS*a in particular sins are brought about by the archons of the way of the Midst, each of which rules over and causes a different type of sin. This makes the contrast of *3PS*' theory of the counterfeit spirit deriving from the archons of the Heimarmene all the more striking.

30 See also the discussion in A. Böhlig, "Zum Antimimon Pneuma in den koptische-gnostischen Texten," *Mysterion und Wahrheit: Gesammelte beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 162–174. He discusses *ApJohn* and *3PS* as both being Gnostic, but believes *3PS* by virtue of being later than the former has simply systematized and de-historicized the formation of the human and increased the importance of mystery-piety over eschatology, not acknowledging the great differences in myth and overall language between the texts.

3PS 131[333]), or the cup of forgetfulness of the seed of evil (*3PS* 131[333–334]).[31] Thus the power and the soul are distinct elements to this author, with the power being the equivalent of the higher spirit in the *ApJohn* tradition, and rather than simply being a tonic of memory loss, the water of forgetfulness becomes the counterfeit spirit itself. These elements are furthermore *bound* together; in particular, the counterfeit spirit is bonded to the soul (*3PS* 112[286], 131[336, 337]).[32] At birth, all three components are small, but the additional element of the destiny, which is bound to the soul but not a part of the main unit, is large (*3PS* 111[281–282], 132[345]). Rather than the spirit strengthening or counterfeit spirit weakening the soul, each element grows through consuming the food of the world, which also contains elements of power, soul, and evil/desires (*3PS* 111[282]). Ultimately, the only way for a soul to be saved is to receive the mysteries of light and to recite them when it comes forth from the body, thus breaking the seals that bound the counterfeit spirit to it (*3PS* 112[286–287]). While the spirit plays the key role in saving the soul in *ApJohn*, its equivalent in *3PS*, the power, does very little. In fact, the use of the term "counterfeit" or "imitation" spirit stands out as borrowed from an outside source, as there is no "spirit" in the early Jeuian system for the archons to imitate.[33]

The set of terminology used in *3PS*—counterfeit spirit, soul, and power, as well as the water or cup of forgetfulness—suggests the influence of the human formation theory found in *ApJohn*. The "ⲁⲛⲧⲓⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲁ̅" in particular appears to be a technical term, which is not found outside of these texts. However, the way these elements are put together, the method by which they grow, and the ultimate mode of salvation for the human soul all reflect a tradition unrelated to that found in *ApJohn*. It appears that once again, a prominent theme has

31 Interestingly, the Savior's power is imparted by the five great archons, along with the archons of the discs of the sun and moon, breathing into the soul (*3PS* 131[334–335]). Although the origin of the first man at the hands of the evil world-creator and his minions, popular in certain other Gnostic texts, is missing here, the Gnostic twist on the breath of life of the Genesis story is still thus subtly present in this inbreathing of light-power into each soul by the evil archons of fate.

32 Another possible parallel in the creation process is the formation of the individual members of the human body by 365 archontic powers or ministers (*ApJohn* II 15,29–19,3; IV 24,22–29,5; *3PS* 342; note that in the short recension of *ApJohn*, the number of angels is 360).

33 Note that in *1PS* the Spirit is occasionally referenced as an important element in the section dealing with interpreting the story of Pistis Sophia. On the likelihood that this section is heavily influenced by outside sources, see Chapter 8. The bulk of the extant Jeuian texts, including the rest of *1/2PS*, do not give spirit a role in human composition or salvation, if it is mentioned at all.

been taken from a Sethian setting and imported into Jeuian theory, altered and subordinated to the Jeuian authors' soteriological system. While in *ApJohn* the one who is not led astray and instead flees from evil is saved, in *3PS* the one who is righteous and never sins is still not admitted to the kingdom of light without receiving the mysteries (*3PS* 103[262–264]). The technical terminology of *ApJohn* is included without an appreciation for its prior role, and the Jeuian mysteries remain the sole mode of salvation.

3.5 *Interaction with Catholic Christians*

Although Jesus consistently plays a strong role within the group's writings as a divine teacher, in the earlier texts relatively little attention was paid to mainstream Christian scripture. A handful of references to the gospel of Matthew appear throughout the *PS*, but in *3PS* a smattering of distinctly Lukan references are noticeable.[34] Also noteworthy is the fact that *3PS* features the only reference to Paul and his writings in the whole of the extant Jeuian writings (*3PS* 113[293–294], cites Rom. 13:7–8). In addition to certain Sethian texts or concepts, then, this author incorporated and interpreted certain New Testament texts.

However, given the mixture of religious texts and practices that seem to have been popular in this group's cultural milieu, and the fact that there is little to indicate the group was attempting to address conflicts with catholic Christian ideas with which the Jeuians clearly would have taken issue, it seems quite possible that the Jeuian authors' access to New Testament texts came from heterodox sources. References to the Old Testament are almost completely lacking, demonstrating if not ignorance, then at least disregard of the full catholic Christian canon.[35] It is clear that even if the Jeuian group or authors did have access to the full collection of texts that became the New Testament, they certainly did not view all of its contents equally—Matthew is used extensively, and Mark and John, hardly at all. That Paul is referenced once in *3PS* but nowhere else may be a function of the separate and more open strand of tradition to which its author appears to have subscribed.

Finally, *3PS* presents evidence that the group is being persecuted because of their beliefs: Mary says that many persecute them "for the sake of thy [the Savior's] name" (*3PS* 109[277]). However, it is unclear whether this persecution

34 *3PS* uses Lk. 12:47–48, 12:49–52, 13:6–9, and 16:9; *4PS*a makes one reference to Lk. 12:49; and *1PS* uses themes from Lk. 1 and 2, as well as a reference to Lk. 22:28–30. However, all other Lukan allusions also have parallels in Matthew. Compare to Matthew, which has potential allusions to 21 out of 28 chapters throughout all of the texts.

35 With the notable exception of the allusion to Ararad from Genesis; however, as noted above, this may have been adopted from another heterodox tradition.

would have been due to general anti-Christian sentiment, or to the doctrines that they claimed in the name of Jesus that might have aroused the ire of other Christians.

4 Key Concepts

The majority of this text can be broadly subdivided into three main categories: 1) outlining the proper ethical and lifestyle code of conduct, including details of the locations to which one who sins will go versus the path of the righteous soul (*3PS* 102–103[256–264], 126–127[317–322]); 2) instructions on protocol for proselytizing, including information on second chances for those who relapse into sin and possible salvation for those already deceased (*3PS* 104–111[264–281], 118–125[303–317], 128–130[322–331]); and 3) speculation on the components of the human being and their functions, apparently adapted from Sethian sources, but significantly altered for inclusion in this author's version of the Jeuian system (*3PS* 111–118[281–303], 131–132[332–346]).[36]

4.1 *Code of Conduct and the Path of the Soul*

Although the first of these categories shows parallels with the system established in *4PS*b, this text's cosmological sibling, *3PS* also has sufficient differences to distinguish itself as unique. For example, both texts describe the path of the righteous soul that did not receive the mysteries (*3PS* 103[262–264]; *4PS*b 147[381–383]). However, in *4PS*b the planets play an important role in that soul ultimately receiving a positive reincarnation, which to the author of *3PS* was unthinkable, with his wholly negative view of fate and planetary influences. Thus the *3PS* account features only the Virgin of Light making the judgment for the soul, who allows the soul to be cast "into the body in the aeons of righteousness" (*3PS* 103[264]). Despite these differences, the lack of discussion of the counterfeit spirit, the destiny, or the power, which play important roles in the accounts of postmortem soul-journeys elsewhere in *3PS*, show that this

36 *3PS* [284–291] overlap details on the destiny of souls based on their actions in life with speculation on the roles of the different elements making up the human being. Since no information is given on what *specifically* leads to the two destinies, beyond living sinfully or living righteously and receiving the mysteries, and instead a great deal of attention is given to outlining what happens with each human component at each stage of the journey, this section falls more under the category of anthropogonic speculation. The concluding section (*3PS* 133–135[346–352]) primarily highlights the necessity of the mysteries for all, including the righteous.

description still has important connections with the older tradition, prior to the Sethian-inspired anthropogonical speculation that came to the fore in this strand of tradition.

3PS also goes into much greater detail regarding behaviors that constitute sinful action, although the lack of similar thoroughness in *4PS*b may be at least in part due to its fragmentary nature. As has been discussed above, in *3PS* there are multiple lists of sins worthy of the outer darkness that are similar but not identical, suggesting that there was debate regarding the severity of certain sins. Furthermore, the list of specific traits associated with righteous living found near the beginning of the text (*3PS* 102[260–261]) is also unique; other texts adjure the disciples not to give the mysteries to those who are unworthy, and perhaps give examples of unworthy behavior, but without giving explicit description of the elements that make one *good*. Thus, this text presents a more complete guide to the moral and ethical behavior expected of the group's members.

4.2 *Instructions for Teaching and Second Chances*

The second category, setting out regulations for widespread proselytizing and the distribution of the Jeuian mysteries, is wholly unique to *3PS*. Although the necessity of passing on the baptisms and other mysteries is mentioned in *2 Jeu* and *4PS*a, in those texts a need for secrecy until the hearers have proven themselves worthy is highlighted. Here, specific reference is made to the disciples going forth to the various villages and countries to attempt to bring people to the faith (107[272–273], 110–111[279–281]); any notion of secrecy is lacking—at least for the initial teachings. The author goes to great lengths to outline the circumstances in which one should teach these mysteries, with many provisions for second chances. It shows a strong concern with reaching and teaching as high a number of people as possible—and although there are circumstances when it advises cutting an individual off from the mysteries, these are extreme and advised only rarely.

Regulations are laid out for how many times a person should be re-accepted after slipping back into the ways of sin, and what level of mysteries they might be eligible to receive—but these regulations are not uniform. For example, *3PS* 104[264–266] discusses the case of one who receives the mysteries of the beginning, which are in the first space from without, but who transgresses and then returns a few times. It is recommended that this man be forgiven as per Mt. 18:22, up to seventy times seven times, and given the mysteries of the beginning each time. However immediately following this another scenario is given, wherein if a brother receives the mysteries of the beginning but does not do what is worthy of the Kingdom of Light, then the disciples are to give

him higher mysteries in hopes that his soul will be won. If he receives the three mysteries of the second space of the First Mystery and then transgresses, then he is not to be forgiven further, and he is cursed to the outer darkness (*3PS* 105[266–270]); the discussion in Mt. 18:15–17, regarding approaching a transgressor with an increasing number of witnesses up to three times, is given as support. Elsewhere twelve transgressions and repentances are admitted, but the thirteenth results in damnation (*3PS* 118[303–304]). In another case, it is instructed that a transgressor *must* receive a mystery higher than the last one he had received for his repentance to be valid (*3PS* 123[311–312]). Although the mystery of the Ineffable is always presented as a possibility to forgive any offense, these mixed instructions for the teachers of the community to cut off a member for transgressions at conflicting points in their progression again suggests both that this was a topic of great concern to the group, and that it was much debated, with a variety of positions being here presented.

In the vein of strategies for gaining converts, *3PS* references a "mystery of the raising of the dead:" this powerful mystery "cures demons and all pains and all sicknesses and the blind and the lame and the maimed and the dumb and the deaf … He who will take a mystery and complete it, if now afterwards he asks for anything: poverty and riches, weakness and strength, plague or sound body, and all cures of the body, and the raising of the dead … it will happen to him with speed" (*3PS* 110[279]). However, the nature of this mystery and how it should be used are complicated:

> Do not give the mystery of the raising of the dead and healing of the sick to anyone nor teach in it, for that mystery is of the archons, it and all its invocations. For this reason now do not give it to anyone nor teach in it until you confirm the faith in the whole world. So that when you go into cities or countries, and they do not receive you and they do not believe you and they do not listen to your words, then raise the dead in those places, and cure the lame and the blind and the various sicknesses in those places. And by means of such things they will believe you, that you are preaching the God of All, and will believe all words of yours.
>
> *3PS* 111[281]

In other words, there is a great mystery that not only raises the dead and heals the sick, but which also allows the performer to bestow riches and strength, or poverty and weakness, at will. This would seem slightly at odds with a group that generally speaking frowns upon embracing the world; and indeed, the Savior informs the disciple that this mystery is "of the archons" and not to be used until the faith of the world is confirmed. However, it immediately

continues to say that this mystery *should* be used to convince people who will not believe, in effect prescribing the opposite of the preceding instruction, and converting unbelievers to the faith using archontic power. The fact that this mystery appears only in *3PS*, and there only twice and with conflicting instructions, suggests that this concept was adopted from an outside source into this particular strand of tradition, and that there was debate amongst the Jeuians in this tradition over how it should be regarded.[37]

Also unique to *3PS* are the provisions given for the salvation of souls that are already deceased. Believers among the living can take action to immediately remove a sinful soul from its rightful punishments, and have the Virgin of Light cast it into a body that will find righteousness (*3PS* 108[275–277]). Given the group's belief in reincarnation, this is particularly striking; it removes the necessity of punishment and a reincarnated form to match the sins of the soul in its past life, if a believer in the world takes action. Furthermore, a soul that has completed its cycles in the world without repenting, and thus is no longer eligible for another chance to find the mysteries through reincarnation, or a soul which committed sins worthy of the outer darkness, the destination of souls doomed to destruction, can *also* be saved through the actions of living believers (*3PS* 128[322–325]). Those that can be are reincarnated into a body that will find the mysteries; those that completed their cycles so they may not re-enter the world are automatically placed in the outermost region of the Treasury of Light. In other words, no soul that did not receive the mysteries in life is irrevocably doomed to punishment or destruction in death.

These actions focus on saving souls that had not had the opportunity to receive the mysteries in life. The provisions go further, granting the possibility of reprieve even for one who did receive some of the mysteries but who then transgressed and died before repenting, and who has no compassionate person in the world to recite mysteries to redeem him. If a soul has learned any of the twelve names of the dragon of the outer darkness, it has but to recite it, and it will be freed from the dragon's torments and either sent back into the world in a righteous form or be placed in one side of the Treasury of Light (*3PS* 130[327–331]). Thus, even death does not preclude the fallen-away Jeuian from

37 It might also be noted that immediately after the passage on this mystery at *3PS* 111[281], the Savior says he will now answer Mary "concerning the word about which you questioned me: 'Who compels men until they commit sin?' " However, Mary did not ask this question anywhere in the preceding text, although she *does* ask it much later at *3PS* 131[332], where the Savior gives a different answer. This further demonstrates that this text was a piecemeal compilation from other sources.

all hope of salvation, and a soul has an opportunity to free *itself* from torments and have another chance.

4.3 *Components of the Human Being and Their Functions*

As discussed above, *3PS* features a multipart structure for the human being, apparently influenced by the system described in the *Apocryphon of John*. In conjunction with the explanation of these parts and how they are formed, it also includes explanation of how these parts grow and develop, and how they are separated and engage in different paths or actions after death based on the person's life. It is noteworthy that this explanation of the human form and its workings appears only in *3PS*; in the other texts all discussion is on the path and nature of the soul alone. This supports the notion that the complicated soul/power/counterfeit spirit/body/destiny structure was not widely adopted in Jeuian circles. It may go hand-in-hand with the apparent attempt at compromise with the Sethian system found here and to a lesser extent in *4PS*b, although it is noteworthy that *4PS*b deals only with the soul and does not recognize any other components, suggesting that this aspect was only embraced by the strand of tradition followed by the author or readers of *3PS*, or that it represents only a brief period in the history of Jeuian thought.

Furthermore, even within *3PS* the incorporation of these elements was not seamless and consistent. Compare the description of the journey of the soul that was righteous but did not receive the mysteries (*3PS* 103[262–264]) with the later descriptions of the soul-journeys of either a sinning person (*3PS* 111[284–286]) or a righteous person that received the mysteries (*3PS* 112[286–291]): while the former, with its ties to the description of the same in *4PS*b 147[381–383], refers only to the soul coming forth from the body, the latter go on at length about the roles of the destiny, the power, and the counterfeit spirit in the soul's progression through the various realms. This further demonstrates that this text represents the blending or compiling of several sources with ideas that were not homogenous, attempting to incorporate and make sense of these outside notions within the confines of the Jeuian belief system of divine and archontic figures and just punishments and reincarnations.

One of the more fascinating passages relating to this complex system and its workings discusses the relationship between the baptisms and the forgiveness of sins (*3PS* 115–116[296–301]). The counterfeit spirit bears witness to all the sins a soul commits, and fixes those sins to the soul with seals, that it might be properly punished after death. The baptisms, however, become

> a great and wise fire which is very powerful and burns sins. And it goes secretly into the soul and consumes all the sins which the spirit counter-

> part has fixed within it. And when it has finished … it goes also into the body secretly and it pursues all the persecutors secretly. And it separates them to the side of the part of the body. For it pursues the counterfeit spirit and the destiny and the body to one part. The soul, on the other hand, and the power, it separates to another part. The mystery of the baptism remains in the midst of the two and continues to separate them from one another, so that it makes them pure, and purifies them so they are not defiled with matter.
>
> *3PS* 115[299]

This interpretation attempts to give a scientific explanation of the ritual's efficacy in terms of how the human being is put together: after burning away the sins the soul has already committed, it physically remains separating the higher elements from the lower ones that drive the soul to sin and which record all its wrongdoings. It is not clear how the multiple baptisms each function differently, however; this is a sign that this interpretation is not native to the Jeuian system, added along with the concept of the five-part human construction.

5 Summary

This text presents an extended discussion of proper living for those who would join the Jeuian group, as well as outlining regulations for imparting the mysteries and forgiveness to those who have transgressed but repented. These regulations serve perhaps more as a guideline to new converts than to instruct the initiated reader/disciple. No specific mysteries are mentioned: they are given in terms of numbers or levels, and the number of times one might be forgiven after having received certain mysteries is the main concern, including justification from the canonical gospels for some of these regulations. It seems likely that as with the rest of the Codex, its intended readers were those who had not yet been initiated or received even their first baptism; the lack of specifics in the mysteries but large focus on how to behave properly to be worthy of them would seem to support this. The explanation of how the baptisms forgive sins, in terms of the complex anthropogonic speculations of the text, may also be related to this function; the one who has yet to be baptized would first learn of the importance and mechanics of the ritual.

This text's distinctive use of canonical gospel texts—particularly Matthew and Luke—for interpretations of group regulations in terms of teaching and forgiveness, combined with the unique incorporation of apparently Sethian

ideas of human development, demonstrate a number of points. First, it shows that this text was put together in an environment where Christian Gnostic texts and ideas were prevalent, and second, that the author or compiler was particularly concerned with incorporating these ideas into the existing Jeuian system, perhaps to appeal to a wider audience. The concern the text shows with preaching and reaching as large a number of people as possible supports this notion—if a large proportion of the surrounding population was subscribing to such Christian Gnostic notions, then adopting these ideas but adapting them to a Jeuian context could be a tactic to interest people into learning more. While the majority of Jeuian evidence remaining today prefers to engage in polemic against the Sethians to establish its superior position, it is possible that certain strands or sub-sects within the Jeuian tradition attempted to engage with it in a less confrontational manner, while still asserting the necessity and superiority of Jeuian beliefs and practices. The fact that this is the first Jeuian text featuring widespread incorporation of interpretations from particular Scriptures known from catholic Christianity may also reflect this situation: they engage with only a very limited selection of New Testament texts, such as may have been popular with heterodox Christian groups, and there is little sign of attempting to engage with issues that would have been important in an ideological struggle with catholic Christianity. There is plenty of indication that less mainstream Christian ideas were prevalent and presenting challenges to Jeuian sensibilities. Furthermore, Egyptian roots for many of the concepts and potential interaction with Manichaean mythology remain apparent, showing that the group was developing in a varied and vibrant cultural environment.

It should be noted that despite the differences *3PS* features in its cosmological outline, the formation of the human being, and the less-polemical view of the Sethian system, this text still clearly belongs within the Jeuian fold. It maintains the most important identifying elements of the Jeuian system: the cast of divine (and sub-divine) characters and their functions, including Jeu, Melchisedek, the Virgin of Light, the Great Sabaoth the Good, and Adamas; and the system of baptisms and mysteries. Even though none of the specific baptisms are named, as in *2 Jeu* and *4PS*a, it is apparent that *3PS* understands its baptisms to be the same: the righteous soul that received the mysteries is found to have the seals and baptisms of the Virgin of Light and the seven virgins of light (*3PS* 112[290]). In *2 Jeu*, the water of the first baptism is from the seven virgins of light, the water and final seal of the second baptism are from the Virgin of Light, and the final seal of the third baptism is again from the seven virgins of light. Thus, although they are not named and the details are not present, it is clear that at least part of the baptismal ritual tradition is shared with the earlier texts. The lack of specific language is likely related to the uninitiated status of

the text's intended readers: they know that baptisms are to be expected, and here they learn why they are necessary and how they function, but the details of the ritual and what to expect are kept secret until such time as they become worthy to receive them.

Part 2: Summary

*4PS*b and *3PS* represent a new thematic section: presentations of an ethical or lifestyle code for members, and detailing the punishments or modes of forgiveness for those who do not fully follow this code. The texts were probably intended for readers who had not yet undergone any of the baptisms or other mysteries, but who were being instructed to become worthy of them. Worthiness required both right thought and right action, and these texts lay out, at some length, actions or attitudes that would disqualify an individual preparing for initiation. This is combined with description of the punishments awaiting transgressors, to strike fear in the heart of the would-be initiates and encourage them to remain steadfast. However, *3PS* in particular gives the reader who despairs of maintaining a completely sinless demeanor hope: there are second chances, so long as the repentance is sincere and one remains firm in efforts to adhere to the ethical code.

These two texts furthermore represent a separate and unique strand of Jeuian tradition. In particular, they share a cosmology and a less-polemic incorporation of certain Sethian concepts that are not found in any of the other extant Jeuian texts. The inclusion of these Sethian ideas, as well as more numerous identifiable references to specific canonical Christian texts, may reflect an increasingly Christian Gnostic religio-cultural environment in which the authors dwelled, and these authors' attempts at syncretistic compromise. Alternately, it may be a different tactic to deal with the existing popularity of the Sethians that the group traditionally attempted to tackle through polemic, here attracting readers with new but less confrontational adaptations of familiar notions. That the most influential text for *3PS* was evidently the *Apocryphon of John*, by current evidence the most important of the Sethian texts, shows that efforts were focused on accommodating or explaining some of the most common or popular ideas of these competing religious movements. Beyond Sethian pressures, continued hints at Manichaean influence and Egyptian background support this notion of ongoing adaptation to the surrounding religious climate, in an area where competition was apparently plentiful. Even the complex cosmology of the underworld these two texts share reflects a multifaceted cultural hatching ground, as the various regions appear to have been plucked from other religious backgrounds and stacked together in a mélange of hellish punishments.

As with all of the Jeuian texts, knowledge of cosmology plays an important role here. The key representative elements of this cosmology are the distinct lack of a thirteenth aeon, or indeed numbering of the rest of the aeons; and the

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unique hierarchy of punishment realms: Amente, the Chaos, the Midst (ⲙⲓⲧⲉ), and the outer darkness. These realms are visited by souls in varying combinations to suit the sins that soul committed in life; *4PS*b primarily consists of listing patterns of soul travel based on specific sin types. By contrast, in *3PS* the residents of the Treasury of Light and the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ)—Jeu, Melchisedek, and the Virgin of Light—come to play important roles in soul judgment and transport, stated particularly in terms of rescuing sinful souls from their rightful punishments when prompted by the ritual action of living believers. This text furthermore introduces language of "spaces" above the Treasury and the powerful mysteries of the First Mystery and the Ineffable; these concepts are developed extensively in *1/2PS*.

More unique factors include the probable Sethian adaptations noted above: the cup or water of forgetfulness given to souls reentering the world, Jaldabaoth and his 49 minions ruling the Chaos, and in *3PS* only, the complex system of human formation involving soul, power, counterfeit spirit, body, and destiny. *3PS* further highlights an increased concern with proselytizing, outlining regulations for disseminating the mysteries and for forgiving transgressors who stumble in the group's rigorous lifestyle requirements. In contrast to the language of secrecy found in some of the ritual manuals—meant for those who had already progressed significantly in their spiritual development—in this more preparatory text, salvation through at least the basic Jeuian mysteries was to be spread to as many people as possible.

Despite the possibility that these texts arose in an independent Jeuian circle, suppositions can still be made about the chronological placement of their original composition in the scheme of the extant Jeuian texts: they were most likely composed after the texts of Section 1 but before those of Section 3, with *4PS*b probably written before *3PS*. *4PS*b offers the possibility of positive effects from astrological phenomena, sharing ideas of traditional Hellenistic astrology and planetary natures with *4PS*a that are rejected by *3PS* and *1/2PS*. *3PS* eliminates this potentiality for positive planetary action, in line with the negative stance on the subject found in *1/2PS*. However, while *3PS* acknowledges the importance of all the mysteries found in the *Books of Jeu*, *1/2PS* marginalizes some of them as insignificant or unnecessary to the believer.

The incorporation of these texts into the Askew Codex, despite their different views of cosmology and their apparent apologetics with aspects of the Sethian system, likely reflects the situation of the group at the time the codex was compiled, well after the original composition of any of the individual texts. As will be demonstrated more fully in the conclusions, the Askew Codex is put together in a logical order as an introduction and guide for new members, with a deliberate purpose for each text. In this context, the differences these texts

display do not pose a problem for the eminently syncretistic Jeuian compilers; both the earlier and later texts use slightly different cosmologies and universal physics from one another, reflecting changing views of astral science and adaptations of outside religious imagery. Despite the differences or developments *4PS*b and *3PS* demonstrate, the code of conduct they espouse and their primary role of encouraging new converts to stay steadfast remain important factors in the Jeuian group as a whole. What is important is that the core Jeuian elements remain consistent: the cast of characters and basic formative myth of the superterrestrial realms, and the series of baptisms and mysteries necessary for salvation.

PART 3

Introductory Texts & Myths

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CHAPTER 7

1/2 Pistis Sophia

1 Introduction to the Text

The latest of the extant Jeuian compositions, these two texts together make up approximately two-thirds of the Askew Codex. These are the only two books out of the manuscript, and indeed out of the extant Jeuian texts as a whole, that are close enough to each other in content and structure to suppose an immediate connection or contemporary composition—although even here there are clear signs of multiple sources being used in their compilation.[1] Their connection is essentially unanimously recognized in scholarship. However, within these texts there is a further apparent division between the beginning and ending sections, which approximately parallel the cosmic setup and discussion of the mysteries found in the *Books of Jeu*, and the explanation of the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and redemption, which operates with a separate cosmology and mode of discourse. This chapter will focus on the material excluding the Pistis Sophia myth: *1PS* chapters 1–29[1–43], and *2PS* chapters 83–101[184–255], along with a few asides in the mythic chapters that depart from the myth and return to the perspective of the rest of the texts.

These texts are intended to introduce the reader to the hierarchy of divine realms and mysteries that are central to the Jeuian system, and were most likely meant to be read by those who were familiar with other forms of Gnostic Christianity. The first book immediately sets out to explain that even after eleven years of post-resurrection teaching, Jesus had not given his disciples the information truly needed to ascend to the heights. This sets the tone that the teachings of other Christian groups or texts are incomplete and based on

1 There is some debate regarding the end of *2PS*. Ch. 101[253–255] is separated from the preceding text by a title, "A Part of the Books of the Savior." It has been thought to be the ending of a lost work (G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia*, xxiii, 210); F. Legge is reluctant to say it is completely separate from the preceding documents and thus calls it simply an "interpolated fragment" (introduction to *Pistis Sophia*, xv), and H.C. Puech calls it an "independent fragment" ("The Pistis Sophia," 362). C. Schmidt, however, ultimately feels that the title was simply misplaced, and belongs at the end of Ch. 101 (234 in the MS), thus accepting the section as part of *2PS* (*Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk*, 31, 252 n.1). For the present work, this latter interpretation is accepted.

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inferior information. A number of lists of elements necessary for true knowledge are given, paralleling the lists of mysteries or ranks found also in *2 Jeu* (and directly or indirectly suggested in the other Jeuian texts). These elements are referenced but not explained—as an introductory volume for those interested in the Jeuian teachings, such important information is not provided, and access to it must be earned through adherence to the group's tenets. It is likely that the *Books of Jeu* were thought to contain the details of these mysteries; they are said to contain all the mysteries of the three portions of light, although some of their contents had come to be viewed as obsolete (*2PS* 99[246–247]). *1/2PS* also highlights a mystery of the Ineffable, which purports to know why all things are in existence, and further claims to be simple: "[E]veryone who will renounce the whole world and everything in it and will submit themselves to godhood, that mystery is easier for them than all the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Light, and it is more successfully understood than them all, and it is lighter than them all" (*2PS* 95[219]). To the new and uninitiated reader, then, these texts attempt to show that while other religions have incomplete or inaccurate teachings, this group alone possesses higher knowledge that Jesus reserved for the disciples later on—and that this knowledge is necessary to achieve a place in the Kingdom of Light. They also assure these readers that while these mysteries may sound daunting or overwhelming, to the truly faithful they are simple to master.

Here the astral realms take on a particularly negative role, with the rulers of fate being a particular target for an assault from the light. From an Egyptian origin that did not consider the world innately negative and that favored complex instructions for the postmortem journey, the cultural and religious environment of the group appears to have changed, leaning toward a rejection of the material world embraced by certain Gnostic sects. However, there are signs that despite this rhetorical change, the cosmology and types of mysteries embraced by the earlier *Books of Jeu* remain just beneath the surface. Perhaps despite the new suggestion of rejecting materiality and the introduction of the mystery of the Ineffable, the accompanying abandonment of earlier mysteries is not as complete as might first be imagined. The group was apparently attempting to fit in to a cultural environment that was increasingly turning to Jesus as a salvific figure and against worldly concerns. The rituals that held sway in the past are not entirely lost or forgotten, but are de-emphasized, at least for certain ranks of initiates.

2 Cosmology

2.1 *The Spaces of the Ineffable and the First Mystery*

Although the Ineffable/First Mystery terminology was introduced in *3PS*, these spaces receive much greater elaboration in *1/2PS*. The very first page of the manuscript discusses the extent of the mysteries which the disciples had received by the eleventh year of being taught by the risen Jesus: he had taught them

> only as far as the places of the first ordinance and as far as the places of the First Mystery which is within the veil which is within the first ordinance, which is the 24th mystery outside and below, these which are in the second space of the First Mystery which is before all mysteries.
>
> *1PS* 1[1]

The few references early in the first book are almost exclusively in connection with the 24th mystery from within outward, and these 24 mysteries' location in the second space of the First Mystery (*1PS* 1[1], 2[5], 6[9], 7[10]). The remaining reference is at *1PS* 10[18], where one of Jesus' garments is attributed with "the whole glory of the name of all the mysteries and all the emanations which are in the ranks of the two spaces of the First Mystery." This passage goes on to make it clear that the spaces of the First Mystery also contain all of the lower regions of the universe, from the firmaments upward—excluding only the ranks and emanations of the spaces of the Ineffable, which are superior.

In *2PS* these spaces are explored more thoroughly. The first of the important references states that Jesus will take his disciples to "the three spaces of the First Mystery, with the exception only of the places of the space of the Ineffable" (*2PS* 84[187]). This suggests that the First Mystery has three spaces, but one of these spaces is or contains the space of the Ineffable. Furthermore, within these spaces are multiple places. Immediately after this statement Jesus begins to outline the places he will take them, which begin with the Heimarmene, then the aeons, the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), the place of the right, the Treasury of the Light, and the inheritances. It appears that all of these regions are associated with the spaces of the First Mystery, which is in accordance with the passage at *1PS* 10[18].

Confusion begins to be apparent in *2PS* 91[205–208]. Here a complicated explanation of the hierarchy of the spaces appears in a discussion of exactly how far a soul is allowed to travel based on the level of mysteries it has received. The lowest level that is given is that of the first ordinance, the mysteries of which give the soul authority to go to all the ranks below it, those of the third

space below the mysteries of the First Mystery—or all of the material realms, and likely as far as the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) or the Treasury. This is followed by the 24th mystery from without of the First Mystery, which is the head of the first space on the outside. Then come the remaining mysteries of the ranks of the 24 mysteries, as well as the mysteries of the other ranks and spaces.

The nature and distribution of the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery, and indeed the positioning of the three spaces in relation to the various levels, have been the source of a great deal of discussion and debate. Schmidt struggles with these issues in his discussion of Köstlin's analysis, and in his own attempt at reconciling this passage with another, later problematic passage and references from *1PS*.[2] He first says that it is impossible for the ranks of the third space to be located below the first ordinance, as it itself belongs to the ranks of the third space. Indeed he believes that the text is mistaken on this point, attributing it to a corruption of the text or confusion of the author. Furthermore, he becomes bogged down in attempting to reconcile the distribution of the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery, with their apparent appearance in the third space here and the second space at the beginning of *1PS*. His conclusions are understandably tentative, because of the confusing nature of the texts and their relations to each other.

The interpretation to be proposed here, while provisional, has the advantage of removing the assumption that the author has made a mistake in describing his own cosmology. First, it is important to note the flexibility of the numbering of these three spaces. There is a general assumption that there is one space of the Ineffable, and two spaces of the First Mystery—although there is some overlap, with occasional mention of a third space of the First Mystery which is generally associated with the space of the Ineffable (*2PS* 84[187], 91[207]).[3] These spaces can be numbered from within outwards, or from without inwards. Thus, the third space from within is also the first space from without. Furthermore, the same principle applies to the two spaces of the First Mystery: the first space of the First Mystery is in fact the second space from within or without, while the second space of the First Mystery can also be the first space from without.[4] In this case, the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery are located in the first space from without, also called the third space (from within), and further known as the second space of the First Mystery—in all cases, the lowest level

2 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 356–359.

3 *2PS* 91[206] also suggests that all of the ranks above the one who rules the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery are the "ranks of the space of the Ineffable."

4 This changing terminology appears from time to time, but is most clearly explained in *2PS* 99[245–246].

of these three highest levels or spaces. Depending on context, this space can be referred to as the first, second, *or* third space.

Moreover, the statement at *1PS* 1 that Schmidt finds problematic is also explained: there, the places of the First Mystery are within the first ordinance, and the first ordinance is the 24th mystery outside and below. At *2PS* 91[205], possessing the mysteries of the first ordinance gives one the power to visit the ranks of the third space below it—but it is the lowest rank mentioned, the other ranks being considered insignificant. Its double duty as "first ordinance" and the last or 24th mystery from within can be maintained, and as higher ranks are always "within" the lower ones, it makes sense that the rest of the places of the First Mystery be located within it. The head of the first space on the outside (or the third space) is the 24th mystery *from without*, thus making it the first from within, or the highest of the 24 mysteries. The ones who receive the "mysteries in the ranks of the 24 mysteries" and the "mysteries of the ranks of the First Mystery in the third space" simply fall along the scale between the first ordinance/24th mystery from within and the highest/24th mystery from without, all of which combine to form the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery.

As noted above, Schmidt asserts that the statement about the first ordinance giving access to all the ranks of the third space must be attributed to "eine Ungenauigkeit des Verfassers oder Verberbnis des Textes."[5] However, the text itself later states that the "mysteries of these three portions of the light [connected here with the three spaces] are exceedingly numerous" (*2PS* 99[246]), and in fact that not all of them are necessary—a result of the development of cosmology and soteriology, and the streamlining of the earlier mysteries discussed elsewhere in this volume. Above it has been established that all of the lower regions of the universe were included in the space of the First Mystery. Thus, it would be perfectly reasonable to believe that the lowest of the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery—the first ordinance—would give its recipient access to all the lower ranks and regions of its space, and indeed that these ranks are numerous.

There is some further discussion of the spaces and their associated mysteries; perhaps the most important information is related to the types of the mysteries of each space and what is to be expected to travel through them: the first space from without has secret signs, answers and defenses needed, but the remaining two do not (*2PS* 98[242–244], 99[245–247], 101[254–255]). This will be discussed further below.

5 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 357.

TABLE 7.1 *Knowledge of the mystery of the Ineffable* (2PS 95[220–226])

5 helpers	24 myriad singers of praise
Great Light of Lights	24 mysteries/spaces of the first triple-spirited one
First ordinance (divided into seven mysteries)	24 mysteries of the second triple-spirited one
Great light of the incisions	24 mysteries/spaces of the third triple-spirited one
First Mystery (24th mystery from without)	5 trees of the first triple-spirited one
12 motionless ones	5 trees of the second triple-spirited one
Unshakeable ones	5 trees of the third triple-spirited one
Unthinkable ones	προαχωρητος (pl) of the first triple-spirited one
12 unmarked ones	προαχωρητος (pl) of the second triple-spirited one
Undisclosed ones	προαχωρητος (pl) of the third triple-spirited one
Fathomless ones	First triple-spirited one from below
12 ranks of the unutterable ones	Second triple-spirited one
Imperishable ones	First triple-spirited one from above
Endless ones	12th pre-triple-spirited one
12 incomprehensible ones	

The exception to this general outline of the spaces and their contents, and perhaps the most problematic of the passages on the "highest light-world," is found in *2PS* 95[220–226]. Here the knowledge of the mystery of the Ineffable is outlined (Table 7.1). It posits the emanation of most of these higher beings or ranks to the "fatherless ones," and presents a far more complex line of development than elsewhere. This passage is the only time the fatherless ones are mentioned in the whole of the *Pistis Sophia*. It is odd that beings with such a prominent role in the development of the highest realms of existence would receive such little attention. The placement and division of the three triple-spirited ones and the first ordinance are also at odds with the rest of the text. Suffice it to say that its contents clash with and are unparalleled in the rest of the book. It appears to be an awkward insertion of ideas from another source, and if there is a section that should be attributed to confusion on the part of the author/compiler, it seems that this is a likely candidate.

In summary, the three spaces appear, in fact, to be different terminology for the whole of existence, from the material realms to the pinnacle in the spaces of the Ineffable. Speculation using these terms was a relatively late development, only really beginning in *3PS* and flowering in *1/2PS*. However, the introduction of these terms does not imply as dramatic a change in the cosmological speculation of the authors as might appear on the surface, or indeed as has been assumed by scholars to this point. They provide the highest

mysteries and access to the various ranks of the inheritance; closer analysis, however, shall demonstrate just how closely these concepts and their structure are tied to language surrounding the Treasury of the Light in all of the older texts.

2.2 *The Treasury of Light*

At first glance, it might appear that in *1/2PS* the Treasury of Light is below or inferior to the place of the inheritances (*2PS* 84[189], 86[198]). As will be demonstrated, however, even here the Treasury is bound closely with the place of the inheritances or the spaces of the First Mystery/Ineffable.

The first ordinance, in addition to being the outermost of the 24 mysteries of the First Mystery (*1PS* 1[1]), is also the outermost barrier to the inheritances of the light (*2PS* 86[198]). Thus, the places of the three spaces within the first ordinance must refer to the place of the inheritances. The soul that enters the first ordinance proceeds "to go to the inheritance of the light as far as the place of their mystery" (*2PS* 86[198]); so it would seem that the various mysteries of the First Mystery correspond to places within these spaces. Later there is discussion of the mysteries of the Ineffable:

> [I]t possesses one mystery, but that mystery makes three mysteries to be one mystery, but the type of each of them is different. And furthermore it makes five mysteries to be one also, but the type of each one is different, so that these five mysteries are equal with one another in the mystery of the kingdom in the inheritances of the light … And their kingdom is superior and more elevated than the whole kingdom of the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery together …
>
> *2PS* 98[238][6]

The hierarchy is further established at *2PS* 99[245]: those who receive the twelfth mystery of the First Mystery are inferior to those who receive the five mysteries of the Ineffable, and those are inferior to those who receive the three mysteries of the Ineffable, and all are inferior to those who receive the one mystery of the Ineffable (12<5<3<1). All of these mysteries appear to refer to the same general structure, but with different outlines and divisions, with the more all-encompassing knowledge being superior to the more numerous but lower interpretations.

6 See also *2PS* 98[242].

Furthermore, the three spaces are also referred to as the Kingdom of the Light, which has three portions that are exceedingly numerous (*2PS* 99[246–247]).[7] This is also the point where the *Books of Jeu* are mentioned, which contain the "inferior mysteries" as well as the great mysteries.[8] It has been established that the outermost space contains all of the aeons and lower realms, accounting for the presence of inferior mysteries among its portions; indeed, *2 Jeu* presents the mysteries of the aeons. Jesus describes the "great mysteries" as

> the heads of the mysteries which I will give you and will say to you in all their patterns and all their types and their ciphers and the seals of the last space, which is the first space from without. And I will say to you the answers and the defenses and the secret signs of that space. On the other hand, the second space within possesses no answers, or defenses, or secret signs, or ciphers, or seals, but it possesses only types and patterns.
>
> *2PS* 99[247]

This certainly seems to point to the contents of *1 Jeu*, with its detailed outlines of types, ciphers, seals, and names/defenses of the treasuries, and with each treasury possessing a number of "heads." Due to the corruption of the text, we only know that the outermost treasuries possessed ciphers, seals, and defenses; for the innermost ones, all that remains for certain are their patterns and characters. It is possible that the ascension information for the inner treasuries was different.[9]

Moreover, the complex division of the mysteries/spaces is also reflected in *1 Jeu*. The sixty treasuries are divided into five "ranks" (ⲧⲁⲍⲓⲥ): "There are two ranks of Fatherhood within, and one in the middle, and two outside" (*1 Jeu* B1(39),15–16). Thus, these five ranks are also viewed as three sets of outside,

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7 *2 Jeu* also states that the baptisms each make one to be numbered "within the inheritance of the Kingdom of the Light" (*2 Jeu* B24(62),9–10; B27(65),3–4; B28(66),22–23). This language is slightly altered in the *4PS*a baptism account, where it causes the disciples to be numbered "within the Kingdom of my Father, the Father of the Treasury of the Light" (*4PS*a 142[371]).

8 H.-M. Schenke suggests the passage stating that the Books of Jeu also contain the portions of the Kingdom of Light should be deleted ("Vorwort," xxxii, in C. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*, Vol. 1: *Die Pistis Sophia. Die beiden Bücher des Jeû. Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk 4., um das Vorwort erweiterte Auflage herausgegeben von Hans-Martin Schenke* (1905; revised 4th edition Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), xvi–xxxiv); however, this passage is in keeping with the scheme of the text.

9 See also Section 7.4.3 below.

inside, and middle. *2PS* 86[191] notes that the twelve saviors of the Treasury each have twelve ranks; *1 Jeu* also states that each treasury has twelve ranks. It appears that the general structure of these regions and their inhabitants remains similar. Both *1PS* and *1 Jeu* suppose that Jesus takes twelve powers from the Treasury, and that these powers come to be part of the disciples (*1PS* 7[11], 8[14]; *1 Jeu* C6(10),7–11; B6(44),25–B7(45),2). Also, certain parts of *1PS* suggest that the inheritances are within or part of the Treasury of Light (*1PS* 23[33], 50[90]).[10] *2PS* posits that only the place of the emanations of the Treasury are inferior—the twelve saviors of the Treasury and all those who have received mysteries will be at their appropriate places within the place of the inheritances when the perfect number is completed and the All is raised up (*2PS* 86[191, 195–196]). The place of the inheritances is only open to those who receive the "mystery of the light of the Treasury of the Light" (ⲡⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲩⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲑⲛⲥⲁⲩⲣⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ, *2PS* 86[191]). Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, *1 Jeu* also says of the sixtieth (or outermost) treasury, "they make a head to rule over them, which is called the *first ordinance and the first mystery*" (*1 Jeu* B4(42),19, emphasis mine).[11] The outermost treasury is referred to with the same terms used to describe the outermost mystery of the spaces of the First Mystery/inheritances in *1/2PS*. It is thus proposed that the places of the inheritance and the greater mysteries of the Kingdom of the Light are, in fact, the sixty treasuries of the light and their associated mysteries as outlined in *1 Jeu*.[12]

The sixty treasuries are divided into five ranks, with twelve treasuries in each rank. By combining these as *1 Jeu* suggests, two on the outside, one in the middle, and two on the inside, one arrives at the three spaces. The outermost space contains twenty-four places. The twelve divisions represented by wedges in Figure 7.1 possibly represent the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery suggested at *2PS* 98[238, 242], 99[245]; the five concentric circles are those of the five

10 *1PS* 46[80] also states that the place of the inheritance is in the Treasury of Light, but it should be noted that this is in the mythic portion of *1PS*, which overall uses a different cosmological structure than the rest of the text.

11 Note that in *3PS* Jeu himself, the head of all the treasuries in *1 Jeu*, is called the "Envoy of the First Ordinance (ⲡⲉⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲩⲧⲏⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲩⲟⲣⲡ ⲙ̄ⲧⲱⲟ)" (*3PS* 126[319], 130[330]).

12 It is worth noting that in *2 Jeu* both the first and second Treasuries are also said to be within the interior of the ranks of the first ordinance and the inheritance (*2 Jeu* B34(72),24–B36(74),2). They may, then, represent broader subdivisions (equivalent to the "spaces") of the many treasuries found in *1 Jeu*, further supporting the notion that the general structure of the highest divine world remains essentially similar throughout the texts.

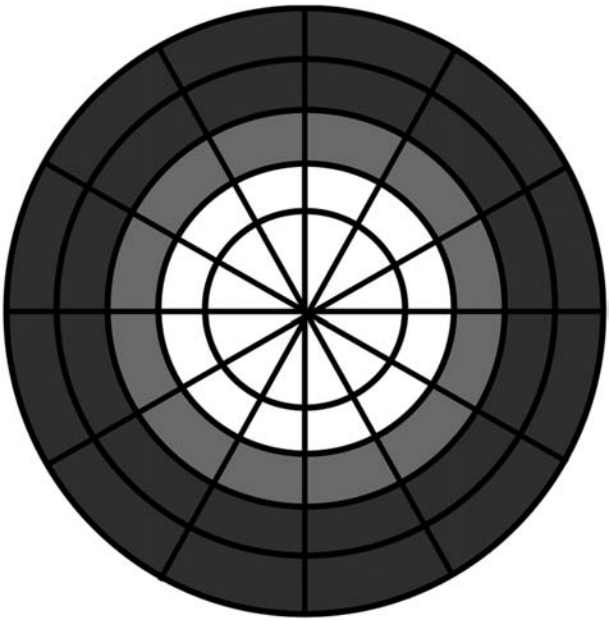

FIGURE 7.1 *Possible representation of the spaces of the First Mystery/Ineffable/inheritances*

ranks or mysteries of the Ineffable, and the three groupings of those ranks are the three mysteries of the Ineffable. The one mystery of the Ineffable contains knowledge of the whole—"the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery together" (*2PS* 91[207]), which contains knowledge of the whole universe and all it contains (*2PS* 91–93[208–217]). Although the terminology of the Treasury itself has been confused and apparently downgraded, and despite the new language of the spaces, its true importance still shines through. The Saviors of the Treasury are fellow-rulers with Jesus, the First Mystery; they rule in the Treasury until the end of the eon; and entrance to the place of the inheritances is allowed only with the mystery of the light of the Treasury. Even the structure of the treasuries found in *1 Jeu* is preserved as the epitome of existence, disguised with the lofty language of the Ineffable.[13]

13 It should be noted that in the lengthy story of the fall and redemption of Pistis Sophia, there is a reference to the Treasury having a gate that opens directly onto the thirteenth aeon, in the place of the left (*2PS* 76[169]); this seems to bypass the interim layers of the places of the right and the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) which appear in all of the other cosmological layerings of this text (see *1PS* 10[18–19], *2PS* 84[188–189]; 93[216–217]). As shall be discussed

In sum, the Treasury (or Treasuries) of Light represent the highest realm one can attain in these texts. The names, mysteries, and rituals associated with it were of the utmost importance to the group using these texts; *1 Jeu* presents in full the mysteries that are only alluded to through a veil in *1/2PS*. Despite the language of the spaces of the First Mystery and the Ineffable, the role which the Treasury fills remains the same, and even in these later texts the beings associated with the Treasury are Jesus' companions and those of the highest rank. The fact that its mysteries are shrouded in vagueness may be because these latest texts are directed toward newer initiates, with promise of mysteries to come, but without revealing too much too soon. It was, after all, the mysteries that were still the most important element for the initiate or follower of this group, combined with a good moral/ethical life.

2.3 *Place of the Right*

In all the previous texts, the place of the right and the Treasury of Light have been interchangeable terms for the same realm; only in *1/2PS* are there clear signs of separation between them. There are but a few references to the place of the right in *1PS*, two of which relate Sabaoth the Good to it (*1PS* 8[14], 18[28]). The remaining instance is in a list of the contents of Jesus' second garment of glory: it begins at the top with the spaces of the First Mystery, working its way down through the ranks of the Treasury of Light. After the three gates of the Treasury of Light, which are the outer limit of the regions of the Treasury, it goes on to say that it has "the whole glory of the name <of all those> who are on the right, and all those who are in the Midst" (*1PS* 10[18–19]). Those of the right are now clearly on the outside of the gates of the Treasury.

Sabaoth the Good's continued association with the place of the right, with its new position outside of the Treasury, may carry certain implications for his placement there. He provides the "power" which dwells in Jesus' earthly form in place of a soul from the archons. This "power," it is later shown, is intertwined with the material body from the Barbelo, and the spirit from the First Mystery.[14] His position in a middle realm below the spaces of the First Mystery/Treasury of Light but above the aeons of the left produces a power that lies between the base material and the pure spirit of the higher realms. The tripartite division of material, soul and spirit is certainly a familiar one in certain Christian Gnostic groups, but here it may reflect the early Jeuian cosmological structure; this will

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in the next chapter, the Pistis Sophia myth operates using a different cosmology, detached from the standard Jeuian system.

14 See Section 7.4.2.

receive further discussion in Section 7.4.2 below. For now it is sufficient to note that the Savior's receipt of a soul from a "divine" figure below that of the highest god, a soul that is higher or more powerful than that of the typical human being, here comes from a being in the place of the right.

The place of those of the right receives more attention in *2PS*, as more focus is given to unfolding the supracosmic realms. The separation of the place of the right from the Treasury is even more pronounced here, as Jesus states,

> when I take you to the Land of the Light, which is the Treasury of the Light, and you see the glory in which they are, the place of those of the right will count before you like the light at the time of midday in the world of mankind, but without the sun. And when you look upon the place of those of the right, it will become the size of a speck of dust before you as a result of the great distance by which the Treasury of the Light is very distant from it.
>
> *2PS* 84[189]

This comes in the midst of a list of the realms through which the disciples will travel. In all the realms of the left, each level when viewed from the following level appears as the "darkness of darknesses." The place of those of the right, when viewed from the following realm of the Treasury of Light, appears merely as "light at the time of midday in the world of mankind, but without the sun." And the Treasury of Light, when viewed from the perspective of the inheritances, appears as bright as the light of the sun in the world. Thus we see that there is a distinct separation between the Treasury and the place of those of the right, but that each possesses at least some luminosity, in contrast to the places of the left.

Schmidt regards both the place of the right and the Midst as almost level with the Treasury of Light.[15] However, the view does not take into account the shifts in the cosmology and the roles of the various beings between each of the Jeuian texts. Thus, the place of the right would necessarily seem to be almost equal to the Treasury in the early books, wherein the place of the right *is* in fact the Treasury itself; in the later texts this equivalence evaporates as the regions are separated, and the place of the right "become[s] the size of a speck of dust before you as a result of the great distance by which the Treasury of the Light is very distant from it" (*2PS* 84[189]; see above).

15 C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 371.

Beyond the division of the Treasury of Light and the place of the right, it is noteworthy here that in the course of the split, both Jeu and Melchisedek are shifted into the lower of the two regions. This is despite their origin from the five trees, which are tied to the mysteries of the First Mystery in the inheritances of light (*2PS* 86[191–196]). The First Mystery causes them and four others (including the Great Sabaoth the Good) to be in the place of those of the right "for the organization of the gathering together of the light of the height, from the aeons of the archons and from the world and all the races in them" (*2PS* 86[195]). This is in line with their role in the previous texts—Jeu is most often associated with organization of the universe and keeping the material realms in line, while Melchisedek is primarily tasked with gathering light from the archons and the world. Jeu's part in the initial organization of the material realms is particularly acknowledged in *1PS* (15[25], 21[31], 25[34]), as it is established in *4PS*a and *BC Frag 1*; and Melchisedek explicitly appears as the Receiver of Light, purifying what power he can of the archons, taking away that purified light and carrying it into the Treasury of the Light (*1PS* 25[34–35], 26[36]). Their jobs are thus essentially unchanged, but their base of operations has been placed in the lower realm in the place of the right/Treasury split.

This low placement is, however, temporary. At the end of the eon, the twelve saviors of the Treasuries will take their places as heads of the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery. Jeu, Melchisedek, and the other leaders from the five trees now performing their duties in the place of the right are promised future positions as "fellow-kings with the first <savior> of the first voice of the Treasury of the Light" (*2PS* 86[195]), the highest of the regions of the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery. There they will also co-rule with the Virgin of Light, and the Great Hegumen of the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ) and his twelve servers. These entities are in the lower realms by divine mandate to perform a function, but ultimately they will be rulers in the heights.

2.4 *The Midst* (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ)

In *1PS*, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is most important as the source of the heavenly powers that dwell in the bodies of the disciples and John the Baptist in place of archontic souls (*1PS* 7[12], 8[14]). These powers originate from the Little Jao the Good[16] (for John the Baptist) and the twelve saviors of the Treasury of Light,

16 An otherwise unknown figure. The Great Jao (the Good) appears twice elsewhere in this volume, both times connected with the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, and once in *2 Jeu* as a resident of the regions of the Treasury—possessing a positive role in each instance. However, the text states that the name the "Great Jao" is actually the name of one of the archons of the aeons, and

which Jesus takes from the twelve "servers (ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲟⲥ) which are in the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ." Furthermore, in *2PS* these twelve servers are also qualified as the servers of the Great Jao (*2PS* 86[196]), thus making all the powers of the key human figures to be filtered through a Jao-figure in the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ in one way or another.

By having the powers from the twelve saviors come through the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ despite the saviors' association with the Treasury, Jesus' own superiority in every aspect, even in the flesh, is maintained, as his own "power" derives from the Great Sabaoth in the higher place of those of the right. It seems as if a tradition of twelve saviors of the Treasury was being made to fit with a tradition of the superior nature of the twelve disciples (despite the fact that here the women disciples are often shown to be equal or superior to the twelve) in comparison to the rest of humanity, without impinging on Jesus' ultimate superiority to them all. These concepts are absent from the earlier texts, wherein the disciples are as equally bound to the evil of the archons as anyone else, and thus require the same mysteries and purifications as the rest of humanity.[17]

The rest of the references to the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ in *1/2PS* are in lists of cosmological levels, simply reinforcing its position between the thirteenth aeon and the place of those of the right.[18] The superiority of the human being who receives

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this figure of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ is simply called by this name by certain archons (*2PS* 86[196]). H. Odeberg (*3Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928], Appendix II, 188–192) and P. Alexander ("3 [Hebrew Apocalypse of] Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction," 238, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, J.H. Charlesworth, ed. [London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983], 223–315) believe these titles may correspond to the "greater YHWH" and "lesser YHWH" found in certain Merkabah texts. If this is their origin, it is certainly indirect, as their positions here are far removed from these Merkabah counterparts, and the names themselves apparently have archontic associations. F. Legge believes that the title "the Little Jao the Good" is a clerical error, and conflates this figure with the Great Jao (the Good). (See F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity Being Studies in Religious History from 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 149 and n.3). Whether or not the Great and Little Jao are intended to be the same figure is not important for the present discussion, as both are said to originate from the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ and play positive roles.

17 See *3PS* 131–132[337–339], where Jesus and Mary (Magdalene) explain the true meaning of Jesus' words, "He who does not leave father and mother and come and follow me is not worthy of me." This refers not to the earthly father and mother, but to the archontic "parents" that provided the sinful soul or counterfeit spirit—to the disciples as well as the rest of humanity. However, note *1Jeu* C6(10),7–11 and B6(44),25–B7(45),2, where it implies that powers of the Treasury also become part of the disciples.

18 *1PS* 10[18–19]; *2PS* 84[188], 86[197–198], 93[216], 96[231], 100[248–249, 252].

the mysteries is also emphasized in a number of these passages. In these two texts, then, the main importance of the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ seems to be its role as a provider and filter for the good "powers" that replaced the counterfeit spirit of the archons in the disciples and John the Baptist. The Virgin of Light still appears in it with the Great Jao, but the focus on the region as a place of judgment is gone. Rather, its position within the hierarchy of cosmological regions is emphasized, with little detail given as to what happens within it.

In the earliest texts, the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ begins quite logically as the interim space between the places of evil (the aeons) and the places of good (the place of those of the right, i.e. the Treasury of Light). It was a holding place for beings or souls that had believed and received the mysteries, but had not yet received the mystery of the forgiveness of sins. In *4PS*a-*3PS*, it serves primarily as a place of judgment for souls—a logical progression from a waiting place for the end of time to a judgment place where the soul is immediately dealt with. It remains the sole, neutral stepping stone between the evil archons and realms of good. By *1/2PS* the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ may be a relic of systems past, as its key purgatorial and judgmental functions are glossed over. It still acts as a filter between good and evil regions, but with the division of the place of those of the right from the Treasury, and the upper realms in general having multiple divisions, the term of the "Midst" no longer carries quite the same sense of being the neutral zone between the heights of good and evil. Yes, it still remains between the two extremes, but the cosmology as a whole becomes padded and its earlier purposes obfuscated. Its importance becomes tied to interpretations of the nature of certain Biblical figures such as the disciples and John the Baptist, as Christian scriptural motifs are increasingly added in conjunction with explanations in fitting with the group's cosmology and mythology.

2.5 *The Thirteenth Aeon*

Although the thirteenth aeon plays a large role in the Pistis Sophia myth, with its alternate cosmological structure, in the rest of *1/2PS* its role is fairly limited. More often than not, it is not mentioned by name, but is intimated by its inhabitants (i.e. the invisible ones, invisible forefather, and/or triple powered ones) in lists, usually tied closely with the other aeons in the hierarchical position before the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ (*1PS* 1[2], 14[24]; *2PS* 84[186], 96[230–231], 100[248–249, 252]). The Barbelo also plays an important role in the formation of Jesus' material body (*1PS* 61[122]–*2PS* 63[129]; see Section 7.4.2 below). It would appear that generally speaking, the entities that make up its population are more important in the author's mind than the region itself.

In the instances in which it is named, it is counted amongst the glories and mysteries of Jesus' second garment, along with those of the twelve aeons, the

ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, those of the right, the various ranks of the Treasury of the Light, and all the ranks and emanations of the first two spaces of the First Mystery (*1PS* 10[18–19]). As noted above, the glory of this garment appears to encompass all that is below the highest spaces of the Ineffable.[19] The glory of the First Mystery thus incorporates the decidedly negative beings found in these lower aeons, in addition to the more neutral beings found elsewhere. This inclusion of both good and evil in the greater intention of the Ineffable One is made more explicit later, in a lengthy section of contrasts the mystery of the Ineffable will explain (*2PS* 91–93[208–217]).[20] In line with this inclusion of good and evil, material and immaterial in the greater universal plan, not all of what derives from this material realm is negative. The material body supplied by the Barbelo (who dwells in the thirteenth aeon) for Jesus is apparently regarded as positive, for the necessary role that he plays in the salvation of humanity (*1PS* 8[13], 61[122], 63[128–129]).[21]

It should furthermore be noted that in ascending and recovering his garments, although Jesus turns the sphere and the Heimarmene, and confuses and drains the powers of the twelve aeons—reducing the efficacy of the astrologers and magicians—a loophole is provided to these purveyors of knowledge learned from the transgressing angels:

> They will borrow from those who know the mysteries of the magic of the thirteenth aeon. And when they call upon the mysteries of the magic of those who are in the thirteenth aeon, they will fulfill them well and certainly because I (Jesus) have not taken power from that place, according to the command of the First Mystery.
>
> *1PS* 20[29]

Magic and astrology are generally accepted by the author as evil, as evidenced by the ideas that they derive from "transgressing angels" (*1PS* 15[25], 18[27], 20[29]), and that the realms from which they originate are described as rebel-

19 It is likely that none of the underworld realms found in *4PS*a-*3PS* are a part of the overarching cosmology of *1/2PS* at all. The Chaos appears primarily within the Pistis Sophia myth as equivalent to the material world; see Ch. 8.

20 The list is extensive and wide-ranging; for just a few examples, it purports to explain the reasons for sin, purity, strength, weakness, poverty, wealth, mercilessness, mercy, the existence of cattle, reptiles, birds, stone, plants, dryness, water, etc.

21 Also, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is said to have received "form which is in the Barbelo according to the matter (ⲧⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲥϫⲓ-ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲉⲧⲣ̅ⲛ̅ ⲧⲃⲁⲣⲃⲏⲗⲱ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲏ)" (*1PS* 59[116–117]) in an apparently positive sense.

lious, as well as the fact that Jesus actively goes to destroy their power in the world of men. However, the existence of effective magic is not only not denied, but is rather actively affirmed by Jesus, if only when derived from the thirteenth aeon. Clearly the thirteenth aeon is in a league of its own, maintaining power and effectiveness in the human world with its evil intentions even when the rest of fate has become confused and reduced in power. The deceptive aeonic powers struggle to maintain control over human beings in the face of the saving mysteries of light Jesus presents.

2.6 *The Sphere, the Heimarmene, and the Twelve Aeons*

Having been essentially homogenous in the preceding texts, in *1/2PS* these lower ranks are multiplied. Here we find the clear separation of the sphere, the Heimarmene, and the twelve aeons of the Adamas—however, they are directly tied to each other; and despite the separation of space, they still fulfill essentially the same functions. Adamas and his tyrants rule all three. The most striking fact is that in the sphere and the Heimarmene, all the beings within them abandon their ranks and prostrate themselves before Jesus (*1PS* 12–13[21–22]). Only in the twelve aeons do the inhabitants rebel and wage war against the light.[22] The result of this futile battle is Jesus taking a third of their power and turning the Heimarmene and the sphere—those regions under the control of the aeons that capitulated to Jesus and did not struggle—such that their magic in the world of men is less powerful.

The story of the Adamas, now called the "Tyrant" (ⲧⲩⲣⲁⲛⲛⲟⲥ), and the other tyrants of the aeons reacting against the light of Jesus and his garment is given four times (*1PS* 15[24–25]; 16[26]; 27[37–39]; 28[40–41]). In the first and third case, the archons' ignorance of the identity of whom they are waging war against is highlighted, and an explanation of the way Jesus changed their paths and influences is given. The second version is a shortened rendition of the events, but all three of the versions mention that Jesus took a third of their power and caused them all to be turned to the left for six months and to the right for six months as they complete their periods of influence. Jeu remains the figure who placed these entities in their original paths, but himself remains positive, despite the negative view of the astrological science in these texts. All of the negative thrust is directed at the Adamas and his followers.

This further ties the Adamas and the archons of the sphere and aeons to the Heimarmene and astrological concerns. By confusing them and preventing

22 In the last version of this episode (*1PS* 28[40–41]), most of the beings of the aeons also worship him; see below.

their wicked actions, Jesus has also removed power from "their astrologers and from their soothsayers and from those who tell men who are in the world all things which will happen … they will not understand anything which will happen so as to tell it" (*1PS* 18[27]). While in *4PS*a Adamas was imprisoned in fate for his sins, here he is the head of it, acting in the realm of men through magic and astrological predictions.

The fourth version tells a slightly different story, although the result is the same. In this case, when the various beings of the twelve aeons saw Jesus' garment of light, they all prostrated themselves, worshipping the light and singing praises to the "innermost of the inner" (*1PS* 28[40]). Only the tyrants found themselves with their power diminished, and they "fell down in their aeons, and they became like men of this world who are dead, having no breath within them" (*1PS* 28[41]). A parallel to this is found in the first version, where it says that they "became like the earth-dwellers who are dead and have no breath in them" (*1PS* 15[25]).

Despite the variations among the versions preserved here, the Adamas, as head of the tyrants of the twelve aeons, represents evil through a combination of lust for power, rebellion against the light, and ignorance. Although his wickedness is no longer described in sexual terms as in *4PS*a, that sexuality was in part associated with production of the stars, of which he is here lord and master (even though in both instances it is Jeu who originally set these bodies in their proper paths, according to the will of the light). In both the early and later texts it is his refusal to defer to the superior light that results in his being punished and a reduction of his power.

Returning to the somewhat tenuously separated realms of the sphere and Heimarmene, they both retain the usually aeonic role of forming souls to go into the world out of the matter of the archons—their breath, tears and sweat (*1PS* 25[34–35]). However, at some point instead of sending their power into the world in the souls of men, they (along with the archons of the aeons) choose to preserve their power by consuming their own matter instead of creating souls, thus extending the time needed to reach the number of perfect souls (*1PS* 26–27[36–37]). In this version of the story, all three regions thus act in tandem, furthering their direct connection. In fact, in the latest outlines of the regions in *2PS*, one or the other of the Heimarmene and the sphere is left out, suggesting that the set of three was not embraced as a necessity.[23] Although they are separate regions in *1/2PS*, their role remains as one, and it seems that their independence is not consistently utilized.

23 *2PS* 84[187–188]: the sphere is lacking; 93[214–215]: the Heimarmene is missing.

2.7 *The Chaos(es) and the Outer Darkness*

3PS and *4PS*b go on at length about a wide variety of punishment realms, because their primary concern is discussing proper behavior for a believer, the consequences if that lifestyle isn't maintained, and the journey of the soul after death in all eventualities. *1/2PS* have almost no discussion of sins and punishment, so perhaps it is unsurprising that punishment realms are downplayed here. An analysis including the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and restoration in the regular cosmology seems to present a healthy regard for the Chaos as a punishment realm. However, it shall be argued in Ch. 8 that this myth utilizes a cosmology that is separate from and unrelated to the cosmology of the surrounding text, and indeed the rest of the Jeuian books. Outside of this myth, *1/2PS* focus quite heavily on outlining cosmology and the origin and purpose of all existence. It is thus quite noteworthy that outside of the Pistis Sophia myth, in texts so concerned with setting out and listing cosmology and universal order, that *none* of the punishment realms found in the other *Pistis Sophia* texts appear, or are even recognized as existing. The Amente and the Midst (ⲙⲓⲧⲉ) have been completely eliminated; the Chaos and the outer darkness are each mentioned once, but are unlikely to represent separate realms in the sense they are found in the earlier texts, or the Pistis Sophia myth. Both references are found in *2PS*.

First, Mary Magdalene justifies her questions to Jesus by saying that she and the disciples need full knowledge of all things "for my brothers preach them to the whole race of men, so that they come not into the hands of the harsh archons of the darkness, and are saved from the hands of the harsh receivers of the outer darkness" (*2PS* 88[201]). Then, *2PS* 91–93[208–217] gives a series of lengthy lists of things that knowledge of the mystery of the Ineffable will grant to the one who receives it, which attempt to demonstrate a reason for everything in the universe. The first part of this list comes in the form of a series of antitheses—why darkness exists, and why light, why punishment of sinners exists, and why repose in the Kingdom of Light, etc. Here the Chaos appears in the plural—as it does occasionally in *3PS*—in juxtaposition with the Treasury of Light (*2PS* 91[208]).

Rather than specific regions, however, these seem to be general categories for types of regions—darkness exists, and so does light; thus do regions of Chaos/darkness exist, and those of light. The Treasury has been shown elsewhere in this volume to comprise several regions or subdivisions, and acts here as representative terminology for the whole Kingdom of Light. Later the list of knowledge of the Ineffable stops presenting items in strictly antithetical pairs, and near the end sets out to explain the existence of each region in the universe in order: this section begins with the firmament, proceeds to the archons

of the spheres, the tyrannical archons of the aeons, the thirteenth aeon and its residents, and moves up through the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, the place of those of the right, and the Treasury of Light. In short, there is no mention at all of the Chaos, the outer darkness, or any other specifically named punishment region, in the explanation of everything that exists.

A clue to what the "outer darkness" signifies to this author or compiler is found at *2PS* 84[187–189]. Here Jesus tells the disciples that he will take them to the three spaces of the First Mystery, which as established above contain all the regions of the universe. Beginning from the world, he will first take them to the place of the archons of the Heimarmene, and "as a result of their exceedingly great glory you will reckon this world before you as darkness of darknesses" (*2PS* 84[187]). Moving from there to the twelve aeons, from their great glory, looking back on the place of the archons of the Heimarmene appears as darkness of darknesses. The same is true of the perspective of the twelve aeons seen from the thirteenth aeon, and again of the thirteenth aeon seen from the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ. Once they move beyond the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ to the place of those of the right, a small amount of luminosity is recognized, and it appears only as night in the world of mankind. From the vantage point of the Treasury of Light, the place of those of the right appears as the light of midday in the world without the sun; and from the inheritances, the Treasury appears as the full light of the sun in the world. What this suggests is that all of the regions below the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ—the Heimarmene/sphere, the twelve aeons, and the thirteenth aeon—all count as the outer darkness, the darkness of darknesses beyond the light of the inheritances. This is notably in keeping with the cosmology of *2 Jeu*, where the aeons themselves are considered to be the regions of punishment.

1/2PS present the archons of the aeons as being the epitome of wickedness, being responsible for evil magic and keeping mankind bound in their control. They fight against the light, waging war in ignorance against Jesus as he ascends with his true garment. While the strongly punishment-focused texts, *3PS* and *4PS*b, depict a multitude of terrifying regions awaiting the sinful and unrepentant soul, here evil and tyranny have been transferred back wholly to the archons of the aeons, and the myriad different levels of punishments have been rendered obsolete. The Chaos and the outer darkness are not simply not concerns given the focus of these texts, but rather they do not exist as independent concepts for this author. As with the regions of the inheritances/Treasury of Light, *1/2PS* closely parallels the structure of the lower realms found in the *Books of Jeu*, but with more divisions expressed for each region and couched in slightly different language.

2.8 1/2PS—*Cosmology Summary*

The non-mythic portion of *1/2PS* (primarily consisting of *1PS* 1–29[1–43] and *2PS* 83–101[184–255]) presents cosmology and universal order as being of immense importance. Lists outlining the regions and beings of the universe in order appear frequently (*1PS* 1[1–4], 10[18–19], 11–14[20–24]; *2PS* 84[186–189], 86[191–198], 91[205–208], 93[216–217], 96[230–232], 100[248, 252]), and knowledge of these hierarchies was one of the defining elements of group membership. This information is one of the keys to what sets the Jeuians apart from other Gnostic Christians.

At a glance, the layers of the cosmological onion of *1/2PS* appear to be the most complex of all the extant Jeuian texts. Language of the spaces of the First Mystery and the Ineffable is used, but this seems to serve as terminology encompassing all of existence. Close inspection shows that much of the proliferation of levels stems primarily from the division of existing regions, often those that had earlier been known by multiple names. Thus the places of the inheritance are sometimes described independently from the Treasury of Light, and the Treasury of Light and the place of the right have been divided into separate regions—despite all of these reflecting the structure and purpose of the Treasury of Light described in the *Books of Jeu*. However, the texts still hint that their ultimate role and destiny remains closely bound, and that all of these realms have sprung from the same original cosmological seed. Furthermore the twelve aeons, the Heimarmene, and the sphere become distinct entities, despite previously being different names for a single region, and all of them remaining under the control of the same wicked ruler, the Adamas. The reason for these divisions is uncertain, as the roles of the split regions remains essentially the same as their undivided counterparts.

Beyond the multiplication of existing regions with different names, also noteworthy is the elimination of essentially all of the punishment realms found in *3PS*, *4PS*b, and even to a degree in *4PS*a. Although previous scholars have connected these texts directly with *3PS*, thus associating them with a complex series of underworld realms, the lack of any discussion of them in any of the cosmological lists or the mysteries of universal knowledge suggests otherwise. The earliest-named punishment region, the ⲙⲛⲧⲉ, is completely gone, as is Amente; the outer darkness is mentioned, but is apparently another term for the whole of the place of the left, the regions beyond the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ. While the Chaos does play a large role in the story of Pistis Sophia, this does not reflect the cosmology of the surrounding text or the regular Jeuian system, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. Here the Chaos, too, has been turned into a more general term for the regions of the material left, and is not a distinct location. It would seem that evil and torments have mainly become the

purview of the twelve aeons, which are described as being in rebellion against the light and hindering the progress of humanity.

Ultimately these texts largely reflect the earliest cosmology found in *1* and *2 Jeu*, while dividing certain regions into several layers and changing some of the language used to describe them. There is a realm of light, the right, which is only accessible to those who receive the Jeuian mysteries; there is a realm of darkness, the material realm, where those souls that do not receive the mysteries are trapped and forced to reincarnate, and between them is the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, the Midst. As in the *Books of Jeu*, there are no special regions of punishment; the aeons fulfill the function of imprisoning unsaved souls. Unlike the *Books of Jeu*, however, there is much more explicit polemic against the visible stars and planets, through their ties with the twelve wicked aeons. Jesus himself acts against their wickedness, affecting the course of fate—but these actions have only minor effectiveness, and are not the main way he acts as a savior of humanity. The mysteries remain the true key to salvation, despite the veil of Scriptural and mythological interpretation in *1/2PS*. Jesus presents these mysteries to his disciples to spread them to those willing to believe, thus acting as heavenly savior.

All of the realms in *1/2PS* are discussed in light of their relation to human beings in the world. The twelve aeons provide the bodies and souls of the typical human being. Key New Testament figures have their archontic souls replaced by elements from the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ. While Jesus' higher elements come from the First Mystery and the place of the right, the Barbelo of the thirteenth aeon provides Jesus' incarnation with a material body, maintaining the superiority of even his material frame. This relationship of people to the specifically Jeuian cosmology, whether through the powers of fate (the aeons, the Heimarmene, the sphere) or the provision or filtering of special spiritual elements in particular people at the time of Jesus' arrival in the world (the ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ, the place of the right, the Treasury of Light), was vital to the books' persuasive message. As an introductory text, it was most important to introduce the reader to these realms and explain how they play a role in establishing the superiority of the Jeuians' teaching over other, rival Christian or Gnostic groups—both through demonstrating the lineage of those teachings through pure souls, and by showing the origin and fate of those souls who do not receive this information or the higher mysteries.

3 Interaction with Outside Systems

3.1 *Astrology*

Speculation about astrology and astral forces form the focus of a great deal of the text of *1PS* not dealing with the myth of Pistis Sophia. As Jesus and the disciples are sitting on the Mount of Olives "on the 15th of the moon in the month of Tôbe, which is the day on which the moon becomes full" (*1PS* 2[4]; see also 3[6]), the sun rises and a great light-power comes down, surrounding Jesus and taking him to the heights. This then happens at the time both of the luminaries, the sun and the moon, are at full power. Three hours after he disappears into the heavens, "all the powers of the heavens were disturbed, and they all shook against one another, they and all their aeons, and all their places and all their ranks and the whole earth moved with all who dwelled upon it" (*1PS* 3[6]). This agitation continues until the ninth hour of the following day, when Jesus returns, resplendent in light.[24] This gives a total of 33 hours from initial ascension to return, with 30 hours of cosmic and earthly disturbance.

Upon his return, Jesus explains to the understandably concerned disciples where he went and what happened over the course of his disappearance. He traversed the cosmic realms, causing awe or terror along the way. Specifically, when he took up his garment of light and ascended through the spheres, the archons of the aeons waged war against his light. The description of the encounter with the archons of the aeons is given four times (*1PS* 15[24–25]; 16[26]; 27[37–39]; 28[40–41]).

Before reaching the twelve aeons, Jesus first traverses three regions: the firmament, the sphere, and the second sphere, or Heimarmene. As noted in Section 7.2.6 above, this division of regions is a clear change from the previous texts, which associated the twelve aeons/zodiac directly with the Heimarmene—and in fact in *4PS*a, at least, the Heimarmene/sphere was meant as a prison or controlling mechanism for the aeons (*4PS*a 136[356]).[25] Here the

24 It is possible that this return at the ninth hour reflects the Markan tradition (Mk. 15:33) of the darkness at the crucifixion. While there he dies and here he returns at the ninth hour, both involve a restoration of light after a period of darkness or chaos. There is minimal evidence the author was familiar with Mark, however, so this remains conjecture.

25 H.J. Hodges argues that these regions are one and the same here, as well, going so far to support a standard astronomical view of the whole cosmology as to correct the text: he opts to "interpret ⲧⲉⲥⲫⲁⲓⲣⲁ as a haplography for ⲧⲉⲥⲥⲫⲁⲓⲣⲁ since this makes more sense in the context …" ("Gnostic Liberation from Astrological Determinism: Hipparchan 'Trepidation' and the Breaking of Fate," 367n.49, in *Vigiliae Christianae*, 51 (1997), 359–373.) He would thus condense the first sphere, the Heimarmene or second sphere (which is

nature of these two regions is both divided and reversed: the aeons control the Heimarmene. This is likely due to the change in the view of fate: while previously fate was an unchangeable fact of the universe and could have good or bad effects, likewise it applied to nonhumans as well as humans, and the archons who persisted in sin were subject to its bonds. Now that it is a purely negative entity, it is subjected to the will of the evil archons rather than vice versa. This relationship of control further implies the separation of the aeons from the zodiac, lifting the aeons to a higher region beyond that celestial sphere. J. van der Vliet observes that in the *Trimorphic Protennoia*,

> the author's aim is a demonological interpretation of the archontic regime rather than a technical description of astrological realities. In *PS*, the twelve eons, in spite of apparently being modeled on the zodiac, are at the same time distinct from and superior to the celestial bodies situated in the two spheres. The archons of the eons use the latter as instruments in constructing what from the human point of view is Fate. Likewise, in the *Apocryphon of John*, the Chief Archon and his powers created Fate 'and fettered in measure and times and moments the gods of the heavens and the angels and the demons and humanity, so that all of them would be in its (scil. Fate's) bond (ⲙⲡⲣⲣⲉ) and it be master over everyone' (BG 72.4–11; Waldstein-Wisse, synopsis, 75–76). Time and space are a prison governed by Fate on behalf of the archons.[26]

We can thus see a trend in a number of different Gnostic documents wherein the aeons of the archons are not depicted as the actual physical zodiac but as transcending it, with the archons as the creators or subjugators of fate rather than beings subject to its cosmic law. These are concepts that have evidently been grafted into the author's system, for as has been demonstrated, in the earlier texts such is not the case. Even here traces remain of the higher origin of fate and its courses—as Jesus himself notes, the periods of influence of the Heimarmene and sphere were originally fixed "through the command of the first ordinance and through the command of the First Mystery, Jeu the Overseer of the Light had placed them so that they were looking to the left at

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clearly distinct in the description of Jesus' journey, as well as being called the "second sphere," "ⲧⲙⲉⲣⲥⲛⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲫⲁⲓⲣⲁ"), and the aeons of the archons, all into the zodiacal circle.

26 J. van der Vliet, "Fate, Magic and Astrology in *Pistis Sophia*, Chaps 15–21," 529, in *The Wisdom of Ancient Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian and Gnostic Essays in Honor of Gerard P. Luttikhuizen*, A. Hilhorst and G.H. van Kooten, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 519–536.

all times, as they completed their (periods of) influence and their action" (*1PS* 15[25]; see also *1PS* 21[31], 25[34]). In *4PS*a it is Jeu who fixes the archons in the Heimarmene as in a prison and places the planets over them (*4PS*a 136[356], see also 139[359]).

The results of Jesus' passage through the spheres and aeons, on the immediate surface, cause dramatic changes in the nature of the powers of fate: Jesus announces,

> I took a third part of all their power so that they should not work their wicked actions, and in order that when men who are in the world call upon them in their mysteries … they are not able to complete them. And (as for) the Heimarmene and the sphere over which they rule, I turned them and caused them to spend six months turned to the left, as they complete their (periods of) influence, and to look to the right for six months, as they complete their (periods of) influence.
>
> *1PS* 15[25][27]

The removal of a third part of their power is reminiscent of Rev. 12.4–9, wherein the dragon casts a third of the stars of heaven to the earth and is subsequently destroyed by the powers of heaven. The second part of the action—the turning of the spheres—is more puzzling. H.J. Hodges proposes that it is connected with the precession of the equinoxes as discovered by Hipparchus:[28] however, the long, unobservable process of the precession is incompatible with the swift changes of Jesus' ascension *or* the rotation of the spheres. Van der Vliet's suggestion is far more attractive, connecting the idea to a passage from Plato's *Statesman* (269 ff.).[29] This passage attributes the dual motion of the cosmos to periodic intervention by an extrinsic divine cause which corrects its motion; thus it moves one direction when left to its own devices, and in the opposite direction when under corrective guidance. "Plato's representation of a destructive course of the world that needs to be reverted influenced later and, in particular, Christian concepts of Fate, which links it to the astrological and soteriological discourse of *PS*."[30]

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27 See also *1PS* 18[27], 20[29].

28 H.J. Hodges, "Gnostic Liberation," 369–373. See also N. Denzey, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 135–136.

29 J. van der Vliet, "Fate, Magic and Astrology in *Pistis Sophia*," 530.

30 J. van der Vliet, "Fate, Magic and Astrology in *Pistis Sophia*," 530. It must be noted however that this concept is limited to this portion of the *Pistis Sophia*, and in fact that positive

This notion further fits in with the stipulations that follow the announcement of this cosmic reordering.

> When the astrologers find the Heimarmene and the sphere turned to the left, according to their first distribution, then their words concur and they will say what is due to happen. But when they meet the Heimarmene or the sphere turned to the right, they do not speak anything of the truth, because I have turned their (periods of) influence and their quadrangles and their triangles and their figures of eight … Likewise also the soothsayers, when they call upon the name of the archons, and they meet them looking to the left, everything concerning which they will seek of their decans, they will tell them with certainty. However, when their soothsayers call upon their names as they are looking to the right, they will not hear them, because they look in another form than their first ordinance in which Jeu established them, since their names are other when they are turned to the left than when they are turned to the right.
>
> *1PS* 21[30–31]

The limits to the powers of the astrologers, soothsayers, and other purveyors of astral magic only apply fifty percent of the time—the rest of the time when the spheres move in their accustomed direction, all of these powers work without hindrance. This hardly appears to be an overwhelming victory of the Incarnation over the bonds of fate. However, it does fit with the concept of the cosmos being regularly corrected in its motion by divine intervention (Jesus), while the rest of the time it is allowed to go in its own, opposite direction, the science of which allows for the accurate usage of astrology and other forms of divination.

Yet the limited obstruction of the diviners does not stop with the changed spherical motions:

> I have now caused them to spend six months turned to the left, and six months turned to the right. He who now will find their reckoning from the time when I turned them, placing them to spend six months looking to their left hand parts, and six months looking to their right hand paths,

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traces of fate's origin from earlier iterations of the cosmic structure are present even here, as has been noted above.

> and who will now consult them in this way, will know their (period of) influence with certainty, and he will predict all things that they will do.
>
> *1PS* 21[30]

Thus, an intelligent astrologer may be able to completely overcome the limitation by virtue of calculating the times for either rotation. Finally, anyone who knows the mysteries and magic of the thirteenth aeon will always use it accurately, for as Jesus states, "I have not taken power from that place, according to the command of the First Mystery" (*1PS* 20[29]). What initially appears to be a powerful change in the cosmos and a serious hindrance for astrologers and magicians now appears to be a minor inconvenience overcome with relative ease. The powers of fate and magic are still active in the world, and their knowledge accessible to those who know how to ascertain it. Despite their evil nature they were established through divine channels, and Jesus' actions were never intended to achieve a full defeat over them, by the decree of the First Mystery.

Van der Vliet summarizes the nature of contradiction and harmonization in the *1PS* text in the following terms:

> The author's technical appreciation of magic and astrology is balanced by ethical and demonological rejection. Against the background of this dilemma, his paradoxical attitude towards the occult sciences can be resolved. His astonishing concessions are meant to make room for a primarily technical understanding of magic and astrology, considering as scientifically or at least empirically undeniable facts. Instead of blaming Jesus with failure, he adopts a sophisticated though apparently contradictory attitude that accepts basic categories but nevertheless allows an ethically motivated distance. Thus he goes beyond many of the standard polemics against magic in negotiating a common ground where both the scholar and the Christian may tread.[31]

In the final stages, even as astrology is viewed as a fully negative science, its original organization by divine channels is acknowledged, and its apparent empirical evidence in the world is not denied. Even in this final iteration, it is not fate—the Heimarmene—itself that is considered evil; despite their fear, the beings within it offer Jesus praises in his ascent. The true source of evil and rebellion has been made to transcend fate itself, making the fate-spheres simply controlled by malevolent entities. In his ascent Jesus affects these spheres

31 J. van der Vliet, "Fate, Magic and Astrology in *Pistis Sophia*," 536.

but does not destroy their power fully, through the decree of the First Mystery. As important a role as Jesus comes to fill, the only way to truly escape the bonds of fate and the chains of the archons is to receive the mysteries professed by the community of the author—the mysteries which present the one constant through all of the texts.

3.2 *Interaction with Sethians*

It will be demonstrated in the next chapter that countering strong Sethian competition was foremost amongst the concerns of the authors writing and compiling these introductory texts. In the non-Pistis Sophia myth material, however, there is also a particular clue that the Sethians were considered a force to be reckoned with. As noted above, while the twelve material aeons are turned and stripped of some of their power, the thirteenth aeon alone is left intact and at full strength. Jesus states that those who "call upon the mysteries of the magic of those who are in the thirteenth aeon, they will fulfill them well and certainly because I have not taken power from that place, according to the command of the First Mystery" (*1PS* 20[29]). It has been shown elsewhere in this volume that in the Jeuian system, the thirteenth aeon serves as the residence for the high deities of the Sethians—the invisible god, the Barbelo, and the triple-powered ones. The Barbelo serves a higher purpose in *1/2PS*, providing Jesus' incarnation with his material body, but it seems unlikely that this is the explanation for the specific exemption of the thirteenth aeon from Jesus' assault.

Given the subtle Sethian polemic that makes up the whole of the Pistis Sophia myth, it seems highly likely that there was considerable Sethian influence in the area these Jeuians were living and practicing. As observed above, there was also a great deal of interest in sorcery and soothsaying. While the twelve aeons are turned and drained to make them less reliable sources of information—while still allowing for the possibility of accurate predictions, as it was a recognized science—those that turn to the thirteenth aeon, the true home of the Sethian "gods," for power and information will always succeed. This may suggest that the Sethians were known for being particularly accurate in using magic and astral predictions. If the Sethians were the biggest threat to the Jeuians, then an explanation for the apparent power of their magic would be necessary. This passage exempting the thirteenth aeon from interference perhaps helps to explain to potential new Jeuian converts, whether from a Sethian group or some other background that would have been familiar with the Sethians' reputation for magical power, why that power is successful, while still downplaying it as deriving from lowly material entities—in contrast to the divine teachings gained from the Jeuians themselves.

3.3 *Manichaean and Egyptian Traces*

In Ch. 6, the Manichaean story of the being known as Âz was presented (Section 6.3.3.1). As emissaries of the light gradually collected all of the light out of the sons of darkness, Âz attempted to preserve itself from destruction brought on by the purification of the light out of itself, by consuming the abortions of matter produced by the demons. Furthermore, the mingling of the demons produced the first human, who contained most of the light-power from the previously consumed misbirths. In *1PS*, the archons use their material dregs to form the souls of men and the creatures of the world (*1PS* 25[35]).[32] It goes on to say that after Melchisedek had come and collected the power of the archons of the aeons and Heimarmene, those archons began to swallow their own matter instead of allowing it to go into the world as souls so they might not become completely powerless and weak (*1PS* 26[36]). These shared elements, while minor and with significant differences in the specific imagery, of creatures of darkness forming souls from their matter and ultimately attempting to preserve themselves and their light power by consuming that matter, may suggest a Manichaean connection. The fact that the earlier texts contain a stronger suggestion of Manichaean ties makes it reasonable to detect such muted traces in the later texts, although it is clear that the Manichaeans were far from the main influence or concern of the present authors.

Furthermore, by *1/2PS* Egyptian influence plays an extremely minor role, found primarily in the use of the term "decan" in an astrological sense. These decans play a role in the formation of the body (*1PS* 8[14]), and are directly associated with the soothsayers. These soothsayers attempt to gain information from the decans, but their efforts are frustrated by Jesus. (*1PS* 21[31]).[33] While

32 See also *2PS* 100[249], where the Savior says, "Now you especially are the dregs of the Treasury, and you are the dregs of the place of those of the right, and you are the dregs of all the invisible ones and all the archons"—indicating that mankind derives not only from traces of light found in the archons, but from the higher realms as well. However, "the emanations of the light have no need for the mysteries, for they are purified; but the race of mankind have need because they are all material dregs." (*2PS* 100[250]) Their mixed origin still requires a great deal of struggle before they are purified.

33 It should also be noted that the term "decan," although not a part of the main text of the *Books of Jeu*, does appear in *BC Frag 1*, the fragmentary hymn of the Bruce Codex with strong ties to the language of *1/2PS*, praising the First Mystery in relation to the establishing of the aeons. In each stanza, the unidentified speaker (apparently Jesus) refers to Jeu's founding of one of the thirteen aeons, and the fact that he has "set up archons and decans and ministers" within it. This fragment shares both terminology and certain cosmogonical suppositions with *1/2PS*, and seems to place the decans firmly within the astrological tradition.

the earliest texts—particularly *1 Jeu*—are practically mirror images of Egyptian initiatory and mortuary literature, the latest texts of *1/2PS* contain the least distinctly Egyptian material. This, too, is reflective of the concerns of the religious and cultural environment in which these authors were writing. Egyptian elements are still, in all likelihood, vital to the Jeuian system—the *Books of Jeu* are still their core texts (*2PS* 99[246–247]), and those texts' cosmology is indirectly implied throughout. However, these texts are written as an introduction to the religion, and the concern is much more with addressing the main competition and current threats to the group's continued survival.

3.4 *Interaction with Catholic Christianity*

1/2PS are the only extant Jeuian texts to involve narrative action for Jesus beyond the roles of instructor or officiant of rituals. His actions in the context of the Pistis Sophia myth will be discussed in the next chapter. Outside of the myth, he receives his garment of light, ascends through the aeons, and personally defeats all the archons of the aeons with his mystery.

It is significant that these actions only take place eleven years after the resurrection—any notion of importance for his death or resurrection is lacking. In fact, the notion that the Jesus of the New Testament had access to the divine is outright rejected: after Jesus ascends and returns, he tells the disciples about "the First Mystery which had existed from the beginning … from which I myself have come just now—*not prior to my crucifixion, but now*" (*1PS* 7[9–10], emphasis mine). In effect, this establishes that all of his life, death, and the entirety of his post-resurrection actions recorded elsewhere were insignificant in comparison to the actions and information contained in these texts. Although later his earthly baptism is referenced (*1PS* 62[123, 125]), the ultimate importance of his sojourn in the world is to bring humanity the mysteries of light—and it is made clear from the very first pages that until this point, Jesus had only revealed a tiny fraction of the information about these mysteries and the divine realms. He only takes on his *true* divine garment and nature eleven years after other recorded histories of his post-resurrection life, and then begins the process of granting the disciples the necessary saving knowledge. This would be a direct insult to both catholic Christians and other Gnostic Christians.

It is also noteworthy that Gabriel is referred to by name as an "angel of the aeons" (*1PS* 7[12]; see also 8[13]), and later Gabriel and Michael are both described as coming from the aeons (*2PS* 64[129]). This suggests that the angels of catholic Christianity are merely archontic beings, not divine. In the first instance, Jesus loosely alludes to the annunciation found in Luke, where Gabriel speaks with Mary to tell her she would bear a child. To explain the commonly known story and still keep Jesus himself holy, however, here instead of

the aeonic Gabriel performing the annunciation, it is Jesus who *disguises himself* as Gabriel. This section also explains the birth of John the Baptist. These are attempts to explain popular religious stories, but to discredit their usual interpretations, and interpret them through a Jeuian lens.

While not a catholic Christian tradition, it should also be observed that H. Odeberg suggests the *Pistis Sophia* texts may show familiarity with the Enochic tradition—not least because they attribute the *Books of Jeu* to Enoch (*2PS* 99[247]; *3PS* 134[349]).[34] *1PS* makes reference to knowledge of magic brought by the "transgressing angels" (*1PS* 15[25], 18[27], 20[29]), which suggests themes found in *1 Enoch* (7–8). On these points one must observe, however, that while the author of the *Pistis Sophia* texts may have been familiar with such traditions and books attributed to Enoch, the *Pistis Sophia* texts are later than the *Books of Jeu*, and stem from a time when a variety of Jewish-Christian and Gnostic ideas were present. *1 Jeu* bears more resemblance to the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* than to the Enochic or Hekhalot ascent texts, and the group's origins likely had little to do with such influence.

4 Key Concepts

These books serve as a basic introduction to the reader about the group that produced them, with hints at knowledge that is beyond anything available from any other religion claiming Jesus as savior. The bulk of *1/2PS* is taken up with the Pistis Sophia myth, which serves a particular purpose that will be discussed in the next chapter; much of the rest of it deals with explanations of cosmology, astrology, and listing the knowledge that will be available to those who persevere in the ways of the Jeuian teachings. However, there is also information to be found about the group's situation.

2PS reflects the proselytizing tendency found especially in *3PS*, when Jesus instructs the disciples to "preach to the whole race of mankind" (*2PS* 100[250–251]). Although there were undoubtedly different levels of initiation or instruction,[35] the command to spread the word as much as possible is still present.

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34 H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, Appendix II, 188–192. However, his connections of Jeu, the two Jao-beings, and the Little Sabaoth as systematized manifestations of the roles of Metatron conflate these multiple beings and do not appreciate the diversity between the various texts and the variety of influences that are present.

35 For example, *3PS* 104–106[264–272], 122–123[310–313], 130[327], *2PS* 86[191–196], 90–91[203–208], 97[234–237], 99[244–247], 101[254–255].

These books themselves are designed as outreach to people who are not necessarily already followers, presenting subtle (and not-so-subtle) degradations of the teachings of other groups, while purporting to show the true realities offered by the Jeuians themselves.

2PS also includes a suggestion of persecution suffered by the group's membership: the disciples will be elevated because they will be afflicted in the world above all men until their preaching is complete (*2PS* 96[232]). This affliction is perhaps due to the unorthodox nature of the preaching this group espouses, which here claims apostolic authority, and which as already noted makes no friends in the way it presents the beliefs of other groups.

Scattered amongst the mythic section, there are a number of passages that overtly depart from the myth, and present outside points of importance. Here there will be discussion of the group's use of texts, and the nature of Jesus' formation. The section will conclude with a discussion of the clear importance of the *Books of Jeu* and its mysteries to this author/compiler, despite the differences in outward language and presentation.

4.1 *A Threefold Jeuian Gospel?*

In the course of the presentation of Pistis Sophia's repentances, when the time comes for the interpretation of Pistis Sophia's fifth repentance, Philip comes forward to volunteer. He bemoans the fact that he has not been allowed to give any interpretations of the repentances even though his spirit has welled up many times, because it is his responsibility to write down all of the words and actions of Jesus. Jesus says that when all is completed he may say whatever he wishes, affirming that in the present it is Philip, Matthew, and Thomas who are singled out as those charged by the First Mystery to record all Jesus' words and deeds. Mary springs up to interpret this situation, citing the prophesy through Moses that "Through two and three witnesses everything will be established" (*1PS* 43[72]; Dt 19:15; see also Mt 18:16). Once this interpretation has been given, Philip receives permission to interpret the repentance.

Prior to this, there is no indication that Philip, Matthew, or Thomas had been forbidden to speak; indeed, after this all three give a number of interpretations without comment. In fact, Philip is the first and only disciple besides Mary who is named as speaking prior to the beginning of Pistis Sophia's story (*1PS* 22[32]). In this passage it again says that "Philip sat writing every word as Jesus said them," but that he then comes forward, prostrates himself, and asks a question. This affirms his role as scribe, but clearly shows that he generally has permission to speak. It seems that the incident with the fifth repentance appears solely to set out who the valid gospel-writers are and to give scriptural support for this number of gospels. Certainly New Testament quotations and

allusions in the *Pistis Sophia* stem overwhelmingly from Matthew, while those to the other three "canonical" gospels are few and far between.[36] The fact that Philip is twice observed to be writing down the story here suggests that *1PS* may have been attributed to him.

Although gospels attributed to Philip and Thomas have been preserved in the Nag Hammadi codices, they do not show obvious connections to the ideas found in the Jeuian texts; it is probable they possessed different versions that contained other traditions. Indeed, Epiphanius mentions a "Gospel of Philip" (*Pan* 26.13.2) that discusses the ascent of the soul past the archons, and would seem to have closer thematic ties with the Jeuian group—and with the *Pistis Sophia*—than the text with that title found in Nag Hammadi. Later, the Manichaeans were said to use both a Gospel of Philip and a Gospel of Thomas (Timothy of Constantinople, *PG* 86.1.21C; Ps.-Leontius of Byzantium, *PG* 86.1.1213C); considering the other connections that have been demonstrated between the Jeuian and Manichaean systems, this may not be coincidence.

4.2 *Formation of Jesus*

By far the longest interlude in the Pistis Sophia myth, *1PS* 61[120]-*2PS* 63[129][37] provides no less than four interpretations of Ps. 85 10–11: "Mercy and truth have met one another; righteousness and peace have kissed one another. Truth has sprouted from the earth and righteousness has looked forth from heaven." Two interpretations are given by Mary, the mother of Jesus, one by "the other Mary," presumably the Magdalene, and one at the beginning of *2PS* by John. Each interpretation breaks the verse up into three pairs—mercy/truth, righteousness/peace, and truth/righteousness—and presents a slightly different viewpoint, generally tying this passage to the composition of Jesus' body in light of Jeuian cosmology, and sometimes presenting parallels to gospel stories—some well known, and one found only in this text.

The first interpretation by Jesus' mother (*1PS* 61[121–123]) begins with a story about Jesus' childhood that is unique to the *Pistis Sophia*. It tells how when Jesus

36 On the prevailing use of Matthew in the earliest Christian writings, see É. Massaux, *Influence de l'Évangile de saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant saint Irénée* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1950), particularly 420–455 on evidence from various pre-Irenaean "Gnostic" groups prior to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library.

37 At the break between *1* and *2PS* (*1PS* 62[126]) there is an interpolation unrelated to these texts, written in another hand and probably appended to the text after its original composition.

was small, before the Spirit came upon him, he was out one day with Joseph. The Spirit came down from the height into their house, and Mary thought he was Jesus—but when the Spirit asked to see Jesus, his brother, Mary became confused and tied him to the leg of the bed. She went out to find Jesus and Joseph, and explained the situation. Jesus became excited and asked to see this figure, so they all went to the house and saw the Spirit tied to the bed. It was apparent the two were alike, and when released the two hugged, kissed, and became one.

This story serves as background for the explanation of the Psalm verses that follows. The Spirit is mercy, coming down from the height and forgiving the sins of men in the world; and the power of the Barbelo entrusted to Mary—Jesus' physical body—is truth, and preaches the place of truth.[38] As in the story, these two literally meet in the world. Again, the Spirit is righteousness and the power/material body is peace, which kissed one another. Finally, truth sprouting from the earth is the material or earthly body born of Mary, and righteousness looking forth from heaven is the power from the height, presumably the Spirit. This is a very literal interpretation of a visceral story occurring on earth, which was probably adopted from another source, since the *Pistis Sophia* and Jeuian texts in general show very little interest in Jesus' pre-resurrection life or actions.

In contrast, the second interpretation by the other Mary focuses exclusively on the non-material (*1PS* 62[123–124]). Here the elements being paired are the Spirit, as before, but now the power of Sabaoth the Good is the counterpart instead of a material body. In the other Mary's version, the Spirit only comes upon Jesus at his baptism by John, and this Spirit meets with the power of Sabaoth within him—the material body plays no role. Even when it acknowledges the power of Sabaoth as the truth sprouting from the earth, it is explained as sprouting from "Mary thy mother, the earth-dweller," placing the burden of physicality on his mother. Although the events take place in the world, the elements involved are all from beyond the material realm: the Spirit is from the height/Treasury/Ineffable, and Sabaoth the Good belongs to the place of the right, above the material aeons. This may be in keeping with a view of Mary Magdalene as the most spiritually enlightened of the disciples, as demonstrated both throughout this text and certain other Gnostic works.[39]

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38 For more on the Barbelo, see Section 4.3.5.2.

39 For example, the *Gospel of Mary* features her in this enlightened position, and also contains the rivalry of Peter to her that is found in *1PS* 36[58] and *4PS*b 146[377]. See also *GosPhil* 63,33–64,10, for her close relationship to the Savior. The *Greater* and *Lesser Ques-*

The third interpretation is again given by the mother of Jesus, and once again it focuses on interpreting the verses in terms of Gospel stories and well-known characters (*1PS* 62[124–125]). Here the background narrative is not explicitly given, but the central theme is the story of Mary and Elisabeth, and Jesus and John. Thus, like mercy and truth met, so did Mary and Elisabeth; also the power of Sabaoth, that which came forth from Mary's own womb—Jesus—is mercy, who at his baptism met truth, John who came forth from Elisabeth. Jesus and John are also righteousness and peace. As in the other Mary's version, truth sprouting from the earth is the power of Sabaoth the Good emerging from her womb; however, instead of the Spirit, righteousness is described as Jesus taking on the form of Gabriel in the annunciation.

The final interpretation by John again focuses on loftier entities. Here the power of Sabaoth is always directly connected with the matter of the Barbelo—it is said to come forth from the "place of the right, which is outside the Treasury of the Light, and [go] to the place of the left" (*2PS* 63[128]). This reinforces the Jeuian cosmological setup in the final form it takes in the non-mythic portion of *1/2PS*: Sabaoth the Good dwells in the place of the right, which is now below the Treasury; and the Barbelo dwells in the thirteenth aeon in the place of the left. It should be noted that at the beginning of the section before John begins his interpretation, the figure to whom John is speaking is clearly stated to be Jesus. The First Mystery who looks within is referred to as Jesus' father. In the final section of the interpretation, however, John states, "Righteousness … which looked forth from heaven is thou, the First Mystery which looked forth, having come forth from the spaces of the height with the mysteries of the kingdom of the light … thou didst come down upon him who is Jesus our Saviour, like a dove" (*2PS* 63[128–129]).[40] The addressee is thenceforth called the First Mystery in the text. This interpretation is especially interesting, as it identifies Jesus with the dual nature of son and Father, or First Mystery who looks without and within, which is a view most clearly paralleled in the gospel of John, suggesting the author's awareness of the tradition of John holding such a view.

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tions of Mary mentioned by Epiphanius (*Pan* 26.8.2) also seem to suggest a place of high esteem for her, although the contents of the former as he describes them are at odds with those of the *Pistis Sophia*, suggesting that traditions surrounding her varied from group to group.

40 The descent of the dove here is not an overt association of the First Mystery with the Holy Spirit. Matthew provides the bulk of gospel allusions in the texts, and this passage appears to utilize one of its striking images without a full appreciation of or call to its original intent.

Table 7.2 lists the correspondences given for each interpretation. A number of observations can be made from this information. First, each pair of terms from the Psalm has one term associated with a higher power, and one associated with a relatively lower power, and the higher/lower dichotomy is the same for each interpretation, even as the terms used to express it vary. Thus, in the first set mercy is higher than truth, in the second, righteousness is higher than peace, and in the third, righteousness is higher than truth. This suggests that while there was variation allowed and indeed encouraged in interpreting scriptures, there were accepted standards or hierarchies for certain concepts. Second, although there is variation in which are used for a given interpretation and the specific language used to describe them, there are three main elements that come into play to form Jesus. In order of relative loftiness, these are: the Spirit/First Mystery from the height, power from Sabaoth the Good in the place of the right, and a material body from the Barbelo in the thirteenth aeon.

TABLE 7.2 *Interpretations of Ps. 85:10–11 relating to Jesus*

"Mercy and truth have met one another, and righteousness and peace have kissed one another.
Truth has sprouted from the earth and righteousness has looked from heaven."

Who interprets	**Mercy (meets truth)**	**Truth (meets mercy)**	**Righteousness (kisses peace)**	**Peace (kisses righteousness)**	**Truth (sprouted from earth)**	**Righteousness (looked forth from heaven)**
Mary, mother of Jesus	Spirit (from height/1st Mystery)	Power from Barbelo/Jesus' material body	Jesus' Spirit	Power entrusted to Jesus' material body	Jesus' material body	Power from height
The other Mary (the Magdalene?)	Spirit of Godhood	Power of Sabaoth the Good	Spirit of the light	Power of Sabaoth the Good	Power of Sabaoth the Good	Spirit from height
Mary, mother of Jesus	Power of Sabaoth (come out of Mary, =Jesus)	John (from Elisabeth)	Jesus	John	Power of Sabaoth the Good	Jesus taking type of Gabriel to talk to Mary
John	'thou' (sent by Father/1st Mystery)	Power of Sabaoth (entered matter of Barbelo)	'thou' (through Father/1st Mystery)	Power of Sabaoth (entered matter of Barbelo)	Power of Sabaoth (entered matter of Barbelo)	('thou'), the 1st Mystery

A three level system is reminiscent of the cosmology found in the earlier texts, which had a more basic right/middle/left organization to the universe, as opposed to the complex cosmology presented elsewhere in *1/2PS*. These interpretations explain how Jesus embodies elements from each of these earlier three levels of existence: the places of the height, the middle realms (here the place of the right), and the material realms (the place of the left). These passages then suggest that the tradition of Jesus' bodily makeup is older than the text it appears in here. This is further supported by the fact that as early as *4PS*a there is reference to Jeu as the "Father of [Jesus'] Father" (*4PS*a 136[355], 139[359, 360]). This mysterious statement is clarified at *2PS* 86[195], when Jesus states that the Great Sabaoth the Good is the one he has called his Father, and Jeu is the father of that Great Sabaoth. In *3PS* it is explained that the archons who form the souls are the fathers of those souls (*3PS* 131[337]). These interpretations of Ps. 85:10–11 then highlight the fact that Jesus' soul (or "power") derives from the Great Sabaoth the Good—not the archons. *1PS* 8[13–14] also calls this fact into relief, as Jesus tells of his formation and conception in the world, saying that having called upon Mary in the form of Gabriel, "in place of the soul, [he] cast into her the power which [he] received from the Great Sabaoth, the Good, who is in the place of the right." Thus the Great Sabaoth is the father of his earthly incarnation: while the archons are the fathers of those souls they create, Jesus receives his soul (or "power") not from the material archons, but from the Great Sabaoth.[41] It is important, however, that he is the Father only of Jesus' earthly incarnation: as these interpretations also state, his heavenly Father and counterpart, the Spirit or First Mystery, comes upon the earthly Jesus at his baptism—and even then he does not yet receive his full divine garment or nature.

The fact that the power of the Great Sabaoth and the matter of the Barbelo are often mentioned together in the Ps. 85:10–11 interpretations suggests a close association between material bodies and souls, which normally derive from the archons. It is also interesting to note that the power of Sabaoth the Good is associated with baptism—it is this power which baptized the race of mankind (*1PS* 61[122], 62[123–124]), and the First Mystery baptized the power of Sabaoth the Good (*2PS* 63[128]). Although baptism can bring "forgiveness" according to these passages, it does not grant entry to the Treasury or the heights. Only receipt of the mysteries, which are the domain of the higher Spirit/First Mystery, can provide those.

41 C. Schmidt also observes this role as distinct from that of Jesus' preexistent Father; see *Pistis Sophia: Ein gnostisches Originalwerk des dritten Jahrhunderts aus dem Koptischen übersetzt* (1925; reprint: Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2010), 67n.3.

From the sheer number of interpretations one can see that this set of verses was a very important one for the author. Issues such as Jesus' compound nature, the multiplicity of heavenly beings and their natures, and the interpretation of gospel passages are all found in the interpretations of these two verses. Jesus praises all of the interpretations equally, giving the impression that multivalent interpretations were both accepted and encouraged. The interpretations of the spiritual Mary and John correspond to each other, although the phrasing is different; and the more worldly interpretations of Mary the mother of Jesus, particularly in relation to gospel stories, are largely in fitting with introductory Gnostic teaching and interpretation tools.

4.3 *The Mysteries of Light in 1/2PS and the Books of Jeu*

Between these earliest and latest texts, there is a great deal of change in the type of language used, in the description of the cosmology and the high deities of the light, and in the use of themes, passages, and interpretations of texts adopted from more well-known catholic and Gnostic Christianities. While the *Pistis Sophia* was often seen as decadent and worthy of disparagement by previous scholars, those scholars hardly saw fit to discuss the *Books of Jeu* for more than a few paragraphs, viewing them as nothing more than an ignorant and convoluted morass. The analysis here, however, demonstrates that the language change is primarily a tool to address a different audience that was more familiar with other catholic and Gnostic Christian texts and ideas. The underlying message, however, is that the *true* mysteries remain to be found in the *Books of Jeu*—which are most probably some version of the texts of the Bruce Codex, or very closely related to them. The cosmological connections have already been discussed above; here the close relationship of the mysteries of light, the thread which binds Jeuian faith and practice, will be presented.

1PS makes a point of stating that Jesus had imparted but a tiny fraction of the necessary mysteries to his disciples by the eleventh year after his resurrection. It then lists a number of things he had not yet spoken about, including the nine watchers, the three amens, the five trees, the seven voices, etc. These elements are unique to this body of texts, and are apparently core to the Jeuian system, appearing several times throughout the texts, particularly in *2 Jeu* and *1/2PS* (see Table 2.1). Their inclusion in both the earliest and latest of the Jeuian texts shows a consistent kernel despite the variability seen in some of the other imagery. It is the mysteries that are always said to be the key to salvation—even at the stage in which Jesus' actions in the world begin to play a greater role. In *2 Jeu* Jesus explains that

> when those who have received these mysteries and the mystery of the forgiveness of sins come forth from the body, all the aeons draw back (one) after another, and they flee to the west and the left … until they (the souls) reach the gates of the Treasury of the Light, and the watchers of the gates open to them … I will give to you every mystery, so that I may fulfil you in every mystery of the Kingdom of Light, so that you may be called 'Sons of the Pleroma, fulfilled in every mystery.'
>
> *2 Jeu* B(58),23–B(59),26

The soul travels down a complex path leading ultimately to the innermost of the inner, the final place of rest. Without the mysteries, this postmortem rest is impossible. This is at a stage when the world is not considered inherently negative; thus, the mysteries serve primarily as knowledge which completes or fulfils worthy individuals, allowing passage to the divine heights. *2PS*, apparently written significantly later, has Jesus say:

> … concerning the race of mankind, because it is material I have troubled myself, I have brought all the mysteries of light to them, so that I should purify them … Otherwise no soul of the whole race of mankind would be saved; nor would they be able to inherit the Kingdom of the Light unless I had brought to them the mysteries of purification.
>
> *2PS* 100[250]

Jesus' role as bringer of the mysteries and the negativity of materiality are highlighted, but still it is the mysteries themselves that are required for a human being to achieve salvation and enter the Kingdom of Light. In each case, however, the mysteries themselves are never elucidated.

In *2PS*, Jesus mentions the "two great Books of Jeu" and states that the mysteries they contain are exceedingly numerous, but that some of them are inferior and essentially unnecessary in the face of the great mysteries which he will give them and which are superior (*2PS* 99[246–247]). This is at odds with his statement in the earlier *3PS* that "even for the righteous themselves who have never done evil, and have not committed sins at all, it is necessary that they should find the mysteries which are in the Books of Jeu" (*3PS* 134[349]). In addition to being further evidence that *3PS* is not directly a part of *1/2PS*, it also supports the chronological ordering proposed here—there would be little reason to develop unnecessary mysteries, and then later to say they are vital. Instead it suggests that a streamlining or simplification of mysteries was taking place in the group, with certain things being viewed as obsolete over time. There are also signs of this in the simplification of the baptismal instructions between *2 Jeu* and *4PS*a.

This is not to suggest that *1/2PS* view all the mysteries of the *Books of Jeu* as irrelevant, however. Jesus promises to present the disciples "the great mysteries of the three portions of my kingdom. These are the heads of the mysteries … in all their types and their ciphers and the seals of the last space" (*2PS* 99[247]). This strongly reflects the type of information presented in the *Books of Jeu*. *1/2PS* itself does not contain diagrams or specific mystical knowledge, but that is because the text is targeting those who are not yet worthy of receiving that knowledge—it is presumed that those who progress in the group's teachings will learn them from the *Books of Jeu* at such a point when they have earned the right to do so.

In *2PS* Jesus makes it clear that it is only the last space, or the first space from without—the lowest of the spaces—that requires defenses (ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲁ) or secret signs. It is noteworthy that the term "defense" does not appear in *1 Jeu*, but it *does* appear in *2 Jeu*, primarily in relation to presenting them to the archons of the aeons. *1/2PS* establishes that the spaces of the First Mystery contain all of existence, right down to the material aeons, but that only the lowest space—i.e., that in which the aeons are found—requires defenses. These mysteries of the lowest regions seem like prime candidates to be the ones the author of *1/2PS* deemed unnecessary for those who receive the higher mysteries of light. *2PS* 99[246–247] goes on to say that superior mysteries are "the heads, according to place and according to rank, which will take the whole race of mankind into the elevated places," and furthermore that the inner spaces possess only "types and patterns." The first half of *1 Jeu* goes on at great length to outline or map each of the innermost treasuries, enumerating their heads, ranks, and types, while providing no record of seals or ciphers. The text after the lacuna, however, does present seals and ciphers for the outermost treasuries. Much of this document is lost, making it impossible to know whether different information was indeed provided for the inner and outer regions; it is possible that all treasuries were not regarded equally. What seems certain, however, is that at least some of the information contained in the *Books of Jeu* was still highly valued by the authors of *1/2PS* and the Jeuians of the time.

5 Summary

Although these texts are most likely the ones produced last out of the extant Jeuian books, they would have been the ones intended to be read first by would-be initiates. *1/2PS* appear to be introductory, presenting a beginner's outline to the universe, and incorporating stories and veiled language that would be

expected in such texts. The more advanced initiate is guided to the *Books of Jeu* to receive the mysteries of the inheritances of light, where this information is presented plainly. While the earliest and latest texts use different language to refer to the highest deities and the divisions of the universe, their central contents remain essentially similar. The most important defining elements of the Jeuian system—the general structure and terminology used to describe the cosmology; the cast of characters in the supraterrestrial world; and the particular set of specific mysteries of light necessary to achieve salvation—are still clearly in place. The first and last of these elements make up the bulk of the material discussed in the sections of *1/2PS* not dealing with the Pistis Sophia myth, highlighting just how important they were considered to those unfamiliar with or interested in Jeuian teachings.

Despite the general consistency in the central underlying concepts between the earliest and latest texts, there are some changes between them that cannot be explained away by simple twists of language or obfuscation. *2PS* clearly states that some of the mysteries in the *Books of Jeu* are inferior and unnecessary; and the reason for dividing cosmological levels with multiple names into separate regions that still maintain the same functions is not obvious. It seems clear that these were written over a period of some time, and that progress in both cosmological speculation and ritual practice occurred over this period. This was a developing group or community, adapting over time to a changing religio-cultural environment. As outreach to non-members became more important, so did addressing issues presented by competing religious movements, as well as making the process of group membership simpler and more appealing. Complex mystery rituals or information were partially simplified. Moreover, the tantalizing suggestion of knowledge higher than anything available to any other Christian group is given, including claims to direct apostolic authority by name—further evidence for the increasing importance of other Christian groups in the environment. To entice new members, using well-known Scriptural passages, Gospel references, and citing disciples with name-recognition as building blocks for their own message had become vital for the group's survival.

CHAPTER 8

The Pistis Sophia Myth

As has been discussed, *1/2PS* are the most likely texts to be directly or continually linked, although there are still signs of different sources being used in their compilation. These two texts together make up approximately two-thirds of the Askew Codex. However, within these texts there is a further apparent division between the beginning and ending sections, which approximately parallel the cosmic setup found in the *Books of Jeu* and *4PS*a, and the explanation of the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and redemption. This mythic portion takes up just over half of these two texts, spanning *1/2PS* 30–82 [43–184].

This chapter will examine this "mythic" section, although its contents are not homogenous. There is a divide in the assumed cosmology and divine structure between the story of Pistis Sophia and her repentances, and the interval passages appearing between each repentance/interpretation set, as well as a number of sidetrack discussions occurring throughout. Although *1PS* contains what appears to be a complete set of repentances, resulting in the command that (Pistis) Sophia be restored, *2PS* seems to artificially extend the process, again perhaps representing a combining of sources. Even the format of the disciples' interpretations of each song of praise or repentance changes after the divide between *1PS* and *2PS*. Although there are stronger connections of content and theme between *1* and *2PS* than between any of the other extant Jeuian texts, they are far from uniform compositions, being compiled at a late date from what was probably a plethora of texts or traditions, attempting to blend them together into the present whole.

The myth sets out to explain Pistis Sophia's fall from and return to the thirteenth aeon, and to present the interpretation of her story, and especially her repentances, in light of particular Psalms and Odes of Solomon. A myth of wisdom's fall and redemption is fairly common in Gnostic systems, and the version presented here clearly shows influence from at least one of the better-known stories. However, it also has dramatic differences from other known versions, and has evidently been adapted and reinterpreted in light of the Jeuian belief system. Thus Pistis Sophia originally derives from the material aeons rather than the spiritual realm, the notion of her sin is awkwardly inserted, and Jesus' ascent is artificially made necessary for her redemption.

The extensive use of the Psalms to "interpret" her lengthy prayers of repentance and praise suggest that the group was now seeking more direct scriptural justification, a trend that gradually creeps into the texts and only here fully

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blossoms.[1] This combination of Sophia myth/scriptural interpretation suggests the ongoing strengthening of Christian Gnostic influence in the group's cultural environment, as seen in part in the last chapter, and in a lesser form in Part 2. Here also the disciples besides John and Mary Magdalene, who dominate the disciples' part of the conversation with Jesus in both the non-mythic portion of *2PS* and the ongoing dialogue with the Savior in *3PS*,[2] come forward to offer enlightened interpretations, making a bid for the group's apostolic authority from a wider pool.

As noted above, this part of the texts is not homogenous. It generally follows a pattern, however: a portion of Pistis Sophia's story or repentances is told, one of the disciples volunteers to interpret it, an interpretation is given in the form of a Psalm or one of the Odes of Solomon, and Jesus then praises or blesses the disciples. There are also some side-discussions where the disciples give interpretations of elements unrelated to the Pistis Sophia story, either with quotes from the Psalms or from other New Testament texts; these have already been discussed in Ch. 7. Here the focus will be specifically on the story of the Pistis Sophia. First it will present a summary of the story, followed by a discussion of its relationship to other Christian Gnostic traditions and how the present version came to be formed; it will conclude with analysis of a possible earlier Jeuian redemption myth, devised prior to the inclusion of the Pistis Sophia story.

1 On the interpretive method used for these Psalms, see J. Carmignac, "Le genre littéraire du 'péshèr' dans la Pistis-Sophia," in *Revue de Qumran* 16 (1963–1964), 497–522; on the use of the Psalms and Odes of Solomon, see W.H. Worrell, "The Odes of Solomon and the Pistis Sophia," in *Journal for Theological Studies* 13 (1911), 29–46; H. Ludin Jansen, "Gnostic Interpretation in Pistis Sophia," in *Proceedings of the IXth International Congress for the History of Religions, Tokyo and Kyoto 1958* (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1960), 106–111; A. Kragerud, *Die Hymnen der Pistis Sophia* (Oslo: Universitetsforlagets Trykningssentral, 1967); G. Widengren, "Die Hymnen der Pistis Sophia und die gnostische Schriftauslegung," in *Liber Amicorum: Studies in honour of C.J. Bleeker*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 269–281; C. Trautmann, "La citation du Psaume 85 (84, 11–12) et ses commentaires dans la Pistis Sophia," in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 59 (1979), 551–557.

2 Note that Mary Magdalene is by far the most prominent speaker; even in the non-mythic portion of *2PS*, John speaks only once. It should also be observed that *4PS*b also names several other disciples asking questions.

1 The Fall and Restoration of Pistis Sophia: The Story

Pistis Sophia is one of the 24 invisible ones, the offspring of the great invisible one/god. As such, she dwells in the thirteenth aeon with her brethren, performing the mystery of the thirteenth aeon as is her assigned lot. Through the ordinance of the First Mystery, she eventually looks up to the height and sees the great light of the veil of the Treasury of Light. She desires to go to that light and ceases performing the mystery of the thirteenth aeon, but she is unable to reach the light, singing its praises instead. When she ceases playing her proper role within the aeon and starts singing praises to the height, all the archons of the twelve aeons hate her. More importantly, the triple-powered one who had been disobedient, Authades, hates her as well. Authades' disobedience consists of his refusal to give up his purified light or power, as is required of all the beings of the aeons, and his desire to rule over the thirteenth aeon and all the aeons below it. He begins to hate Pistis Sophia, then, because she wished to go above him and outside of his control.

To act on his hate, he emanates a lion-faced power along with a multitude of other emanations, and sends them below all the aeons to the Chaos. The lion-faced power is made up of Authades' light power, which he refused to give up to the height. Through the ordinance of the first ordinance, Authades persecutes Pistis Sophia so that she should look below, see the lion-faced light power, and desire it for herself. Sure enough, when she sees it, she does not realize its origin, thinking that it is the light of the height. She thinks to herself, "I will go to that place without my partner, and take the light, and create of it for myself aeons of light, so that I shall be able to go to the Light of Lights which is in the highest height" (*1PS* 31[45–46]). She begins her journey downward, with the archons of the twelve aeons persecuting her along the way, and when she reaches the lion-faced power in the Chaos, she attempts to swallow it. Instead, the emanations of Authades surround her, and the lion-faced power swallows *her* light powers. Her matter in the Chaos becomes another lion-faced power called Jaldabaoth, "of whom I [Jesus] have spoken to you many times" (*1PS* 31[46]).

Pistis Sophia realizes her error, and begins the lengthy process of repenting. There are thirteen initial repentances. After the seventh, although the First Mystery had not yet commanded that she be brought up from the Chaos, Jesus takes pity on her and moves her "to a place in the Chaos which was a little wider" (*1PS* 47[84]). After the thirteenth, the ordinance of all the afflictions which had been ordained for her was completed, and the First Mystery sends Jesus a great light power to help Pistis Sophia and bring her up from the Chaos. Jesus also sends a great light power from himself, and the two powers meet to

aid her (*1PS* 60[118–119]). It is revealed that the speaker of all these words in the guise of Jesus is in fact an element of the First Mystery. Jesus/First Mystery calls Gabriel and Michael down from the aeons and gives them the massive outpouring of light, instructing them to go into the Chaos, take back her stolen light-powers from Authades' emanations, and to restore them to her. Once her light is restored, the great outpouring of light from on high returns out of the Chaos.

The emanations of Authades become upset that Pistis Sophia's light powers have been taken from them and restored to her, so they call upon Authades, who sends more light power down to them. Many of them become forms with animal heads, such as snakes, dragons, and a seven-headed basilisk, and together they drag Pistis Sophia back into the Chaos. Adamas, the Tyrant, also looks down from the twelve aeons, and is angry with Pistis Sophia for her desire to go to the Light of Lights above them all. He, too, sends down a power to oppress her. Finally she cries again to the light; once again Jesus/First Mystery sends Gabriel and Michael to the Chaos with the great outpouring of light to guide her out. Jesus/First Mystery descends to the Chaos as well, restraining the emanations of Authades so they cannot return to the thirteenth aeon, and removing the power from the lion-faced emanation and all the other emanations. As she is brought forth from the Chaos, Pistis Sophia sings a number of further songs of praise.

However, she is not restored to her place in the thirteenth aeon, the "place of righteousness" (*1PS* 32[51], 50[94], 55[106]), at this point, which is what she has desired; instead, she is placed below it. When the First Mystery begins to abandon her there, she tells him that Adamas, the Tyrant, and Authades will oppress her when he is gone and once again take all of her light, and asks him to remove their light so they cannot oppress her further. He responds that his Father has not yet commanded that their light be taken away, but he will seal them so that they cannot wage war against her. Their light will be removed at the appointed time, "when the three times are completed" (*2PS* 76[168–169]). She will know when this time comes because the gate of the Treasury of Light—"this which opens to the thirteenth aeon, namely the left" (*2PS* 76[169])—will open. At that point the Adamas will renew his offensive against her, and she must again sing praises so that the First Mystery might again help her. With this advice she rejoices, and he abandons her below the thirteenth aeon.

This brings the story back to the opening of *1PS*, with Jesus on the Mount of Olives before he had been sent his garment from on high. The time comes when Adamas looks from the twelve aeons and sees his demonic power in the Chaos with no light in it. Although it was the First Mystery who had removed its light, Adamas blames Pistis Sophia, and begins emanating dark emanations in anger,

with the intent of bringing her back to the Chaos. She again sings praises to the light, and without any further fuss or fighting, Jesus brings her back into the thirteenth aeon. Her fellow invisible ones recognize her, but not Jesus, so she sings more praises so they would know "the wonders which I [Jesus] had done for her on the earth of mankind below, until I saved her" (*2PS* 81[178–179]).

2 The Fall and Restoration of Pistis Sophia and the *Apocryphon of John*

Upon close inspection, it becomes apparent that the story of Pistis Sophia is an adaptation—and subversion—of the version of Sophia's fall and restoration in the *Apocryphon of John*.[3] Many of the details found in this latter version are mentioned with no background, and without connection to the Jeuian worldview. In fact, several of these details appear to be artificially and awkwardly included, specifically to parallel this version of the story.

Pistis Sophia originates in the thirteenth aeon as one of the offspring of the invisible one/god.[4] As has been established previously,[5] the invisible god of the

3 Although the discussion here focuses on parallels and comparisons with *ApJohn*, it should be noted that there are some distinct similarities to a portion of the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, particularly (39:13–32). There the great light Eleleth, one of the light aeons tied to the son of the highest god (the invisible god in Jeuian terms) declares himself king and associates himself with Chaos and the underworld, and shortly thereafter Jaldabaoth appears as ruler of the Chaos/underworld. This Jaldabaoth is he "who had snatched [power] away from the innocent one (i.e., Sophia); who had earlier overpowered her who is the Light's Epinoia (i.e., Sophia) who had descended." This passage provides parallels for the existence of a separate being associated with the highest deities who craves power and is willing to associate with the realms of Chaos, and also for Sophia's innocence and the wrongful seizing of her power. It is quite probable that while parallels to the *ApJohn*, apparently the most prominent of the Sophia myths of the period, are most evident, an amalgamation of versions of the myth was used in compiling the structure of the *PS* myth.

4 In her second repentance, Pistis Sophia states that the light of the Light emanated her, and that the Light caused her to be emanated forth (*1PS* 35[57]). Clearly as the offspring of the invisible god and/or the Barbelo, this is not the case in a Jeuian context. It is possible that this is a throwback to a more typical Gnostic notion of her divine origin; alternatively, it may represent the Jeuian idea that Jeu, emanation of the highest god, causes the emanation and organization of the lower, aeonic beings. Later Pistis Sophia mistakes Jesus' light for "the light of the Treasury which she had once seen, and in which she believed" (*1PS* 47[84–85]), making the association with Jeu more likely. Her origin in the thirteenth aeon, which here is lower and material, is unquestioned.

5 See Section 2.3.3.

thirteenth aeon in Jeuian texts is a derogatory representation of the highest god of the Sethian system. *ApJohn* also makes Sophia loosely connected to this deity, as the last of the twelve aeons attending Autogenes, the Self-Generated, the son of Barbelo completed through the gift of the invisible spirit (*ApJohn* III 12,15–19; BG 34,7–11; II 8,20–23). The term "aeon" has a mixed use in *ApJohn*, sometimes referring to entities such as Sophia, and other times referring to realms. In the *Pistis Sophia* it is consistently used in the latter sense, and thus the aeon Sophia comes to be placed in the aeonic realms of Jeuian thought. Of course, in the Sethian sense these were aeons of light, originating from the highest deities, while the Jeuian system steadfastly places them in the lower, material realm. Thus the heroine of the story is reduced from a divine aeon to a confused material being.

Sophia conceives a thought from herself, to bring forth her likeness out of herself without her consort, and without the approval of the invisible spirit (*ApJohn* III 14,9–21; BG 36,16–37,4; II 9,25–31). Pistis Sophia has a similar idea, as she sees the false light of the lion-face in the Chaos and thinks, "I will go to that place without my partner, and take the light, and create of it for myself aeons of light, so that I shall be able to go to the Light of Lights which is in the highest height" (*1PS* 31[45–46]). However, while important in the Sethian myth, in the Jeuian system the concept of consorts or partners (ϲⲩⲛⲍⲩⲅⲟⲥ) for the entities of either the height or the material aeons is lacking, *except* in the story of Pistis Sophia and her fall. The notion of pairs of beings producing or emanating together with permission of the highest god is completely foreign—indeed, persistence in sexual congress is the height of the wicked archons of the twelve aeons' sin (*4PS*a 136[355–356]). The notion of "aeons of light" is also absent from the Jeuian system, where all the aeons are in the lower realms of the left—but Pistis Sophia's desire to create one for herself is parallel to the *ApJohn* Sophia, as an aeon of light, wishing to bring forth a likeness of herself.

Then there is the result of this desire: in *ApJohn*, the fruit of Sophia's misguided thought is an imperfect being with the face of a lion and a face of a snake (*ApJohn* III 15,5–11; BG 37,13–21; II 10,3–9). She casts this frightful abomination out of the height and names him Jaldabaoth; he is said to have taken a great power from his mother. In *PS1/2*, the lion-faced power already exists, and is the product of a jealous evil entity—but the author realizes this problem with the story, and thus Pistis Sophia's matter "Became an archon with a lion-face in the Chaos … namely Jaldabaoth" (*1PS* 31[46]).[6] This is the only time Jaldabaoth

6 "ⲁⲥϣⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ⲣⲟ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩⲓ ⲉ̄ⲙ ⲡⲉⲭⲁⲟⲥ … ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲡⲉ ⲓⲁⲗⲇⲁⲃⲁⲱⲑ" MacDermot translates the first phrase as "There existed an archon …" but is seems likely that the sense "it became"

is referenced in the whole of *1/2PS*, and all action by a lion-faced emanation in the story, including the stealing of Pistis Sophia's light powers, appears to be performed by the original emanation of Authades. This one-off reference, then, seems to be intended as an explanation of how the lion-faced Jaldabaoth originated from the Sophia-figure in line with the original myth, despite the fact that she does not actively produce anything—amongst the myriad of other inconsistencies between the two stories.

In *ApJohn*, Sophia's illegitimate offspring begins creating aeons and angels of his own and declaring himself ruler, but keeps the light he stole from his mother to himself. Without this light she is deficient, so Sophia—the mother—weeps and gives a prayer of repentance. Her brothers pray for her, and when the invisible spirit consents, her consort comes down to her to correct her deficiencies—but she is not restored to her own aeon. Instead, she is placed in the region directly below her place in the height until her deficiency is corrected (*ApJohn* III 21,1–15; BG 46,7–47,13; II 13,36–14,13). The *Pistis Sophia* makes her position much worse: rather than witnessing the unfolding of her offspring and his actions from afar, here she is actively tormented by wicked emanations she had nothing to do with, that hate her for her love of the light and that have stolen all of her light in jealousy. Furthermore, she says she has "become a stranger to my brothers" (*1PS* 32[48]), that "I looked for my partner, that he should come and fight for me, but he did not come" (*1PS* 32[49]), that "my brother, my partner, feared to help me, on account of those among whom I was held" (*1PS* 48[87]); of the Light-deity she says, "thou didst not allow my fellow-emanations to help me; and thou didst not allow my partner to save me from my afflictions" (*1PS* 41[70]). While in *ApJohn* Sophia's brothers pitied and prayed for her, and her consort was allowed to offer her aid, Pistis Sophia is denied all of these comforts, and her brethren remain distant and silent. This is in part because in *ApJohn* she and her siblings belong to the height, and so they have a modicum of power and intelligence, while in the *Pistis Sophia* they are offspring of an inferior being dwelling in the material realm and have no knowledge or power. Instead of her consort, Jesus—the First Mystery, and representative of the *true* highest being—is sent to help her. Unlike the *ApJohn* version, he visits once without the permission of the higher spirit, acting out of personal compassion; but on that occasion he can only move her within the confines of Chaos, and she does not recognize who is helping her. After she has

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was intended. For a discussion on Jaldabaoth/the creator and archontic theriomorphism, see T. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 106–128. See also H.M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), and his discussion of the *Pistis Sophia*, 26–34.

completed her required number of repentances—one for each aeon through which she descended—then the Father gives permission for Jesus/First Mystery to help her, in lieu of her lower consort. In this case, he restores all of her light to her immediately. He does not return her to her proper place, however, leaving her in the realm immediately before her rightful position. In the *ApJohn* version she is left outside until she restores her light or deficiency, but that is not the case here—her light is *already* restored, so there is no reason why she should be left outside of her place, other than to follow the pattern of the earlier story.

Why, then, is there the extra appearance of the salvific figure, before the time ordained by the First Mystery arrives? This, combined with the second visit when he moves her to the twelfth aeon, and the final visit where she is restored to her place, may provide a parallel to the salvific triple-descent scheme found in the Pronoia hymn of the long recension of *ApJohn*. In the first descent, the salvific figure enters the prison, and the foundations of the Chaos shake, but she hides herself and remains unrecognized (*ApJohn* II 30,17–21; IV 47,2–8). In the second descent she again enters the darkness and the foundations of the Chaos shake, that they might fall down and destroy those that are in the Chaos—but again she leaves "lest they be destroyed before the time" (*ApJohn* II 30,25–32; IV 47,12–22). Finally, in the third descent she again enters the prison "of the body," speaks to the one to be saved, warning him of the demons of the Chaos that ensnare him, and raises him up to the honored place (*ApJohn* II 31,3–24; IV 48,3–49,4).

In Jesus/First Mystery's first, unauthorized visit to Pistis Sophia after her seventh repentance, he helps her just a little, and she does not know who helped her (*1PS* 47[84]). With his second visit after her thirteenth repentance, when the ordinance of all her afflictions had been completed, he leaves her just outside of her place, and she asks that he remove all the light from the archons and emanations of Authades and Adamas so that they might no longer have the power to oppress her. Jesus/First Mystery replies that his Father has not yet given the command to remove their light, but she will be safe "until the appointed time comes when my Father commands me to take away their light from them," and these things will happen "when the three times are completed" (*2PS* 75–76[168–169]). On the third visit, he brings Pistis Sophia back to her place—which in the Jeuian system is not a divine location, but which was so in the Sethian version. Thus, we find the patterns of Visit 1: hiddenness/ignorance of the truth, Visit 2: waiting for the appointed time to vanquish the oppressors, and Visit 3: restoration to the height/original place.

All in all the *Pistis Sophia* myth transforms the figure of Sophia from *ApJohn*—who actively produces an emanation without permission, tricks her

illegitimate offspring into giving up his power into Adam, and works to restore her own light—into a completely *passive* figure, who is tricked, bullied, and ultimately made whole again all through outside forces. The entire purpose of the *ApJohn* myth is in fact lost in the retelling: originally it served to explain the advent of evil, the creation of the world, the origin of man, and salvation history, all of which are completely lacking from the *Pistis Sophia*. Instead, evil already exists, Pistis Sophia creates nothing, and there is no discussion of man's origin or how mankind is associated with the divine. While the descent and ascent of the savior restores Pistis Sophia to her place in the (material) aeons, it does not repair any deficiency in her or the cosmos, as her transgression had already been forgiven and her light restored. This "salvific" descent in itself does nothing for humanity at large, whose connection to the divine world remains vague. Only the mysteries that Jesus/First Mystery brought to earth can save those individuals who receive them and grant them entry to the Treasury of Light; all others, including the righteous, must continue to be reincarnated until they find these mysteries.

3 Mythic Cosmology and Sethian Polemic

Just as the story of Pistis Sophia and her struggles has little relation to the surrounding text, the cosmology found in the myth bears little resemblance to the cosmology developed in the rest of the *Pistis Sophia*. Unlike most extant Jeuian literature, the unfolding of a complex universe and knowledge of how to navigate it play little role here, because that is knowledge reserved for those advanced enough to receive the mysteries, or at least to begin the preparations to receive them. In this modification of a well-known Sethian story serving as an introductory piece to those new to the Jeuian faith, the cosmology is simplified and altered to accommodate the details of the familiar story, while still implying that there is a higher truth awaiting those willing to work to obtain it.

The cosmology in the rest of *1/2PS* is the most complex of all the extant Jeuian texts, comprising at the very least the firmament, the first sphere, the Heimarmene, the twelve aeons, the thirteenth aeon, the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ), the place of the right, the Treasury of Light, and the Spaces of the Ineffable. In the Pistis Sophia myth, however, the basic outline consists of only the Treasury of Light, the thirteenth aeon, the twelve aeons, and the Chaos, which exist in a linear hierarchy where each directly borders the region above it.[7] Thus, for

7 The term Amente appears twice (*1PS* 49[89]; *2PS* 72[163]), but in both instances they are

example, the Treasury of Light in the height shares a gate directly with the thirteenth aeon (*2PS* 76[169]). This layout is *only* found in the context of the myth itself; when the conversation between Jesus and the disciples turns away from the myth—for example, during the lengthy interpretation of Ps. 85:10–11 and how it relates to Jesus' body and its formation[8]—the full, "real" cosmology of the Jeuian system is acknowledged.

Although the Treasury of Light is established as the realm of the true light, it is the thirteenth aeon that is the focal point of the myth. In this mythic context, it is referred to as a place in the height (*1PS* 29[42], 57[110], *2PS* 74[166]), and as the "place of righteousness" (*1PS* 32[51], 50[94], 55[106]).[9] However, it is a material aeon, where the arrogant would-be god of the material world not only dwells, but apparently also originates, along with his wicked emanations. While in the Sethian story Sophia is by nature superior to her inferior, mutant offspring who is made to dwell outside of the height, here not only do they arise in the same place, but as one of the triple-powered ones with the invisible god, Authades is *superior* in origin to Pistis Sophia, who is simply one of the

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in the Psalm counterparts of Pistis Sophia's repentances—it serves as the symbol for the Chaos, and is simply the Egyptian translation of the term "Sheol" in the Psalms. Pistis Sophia also requests that an "archon of the outer darkness" should be at Authades' right hand (*1PS* 55[105]); however, this serves to parallel the Psalm that calls for the speaker's tormentors to have the devil at their right hand—it fulfills a literary necessity to have an evil ruler at the side of the innocent speaker's tormentor, who in Pistis Sophia's case is already supposedly the ruler of evil. The outer darkness itself is not included in the mythic cosmology, as the ultimate place of punishment for the wicked emanations here is the Chaos.

8 See Section 7.4.2.

9 Note that the term here translated as righteousness, ⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥⲩⲛⲏ, can also mean "justice." A.D. DeConick presents it as "correction" ("Apostles as Archons: The Fight for Apostolic Authority and the Emergence of Gnosticism in the Tchacos Codex and Other Early Christian Literature," 285, in *The Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Conference on the Tchacos Codex at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13–16, 2008*, A.D. DeConick, ed. [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 241–288; *The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says* [2007; revised edition London: Continuum, 2009], 166); but this does not seem fully in fitting with the role of the realm. It is not a place of punishment, even in the sense in which Sabaoth the Adamas is imprisoned in the Heimarmene as punishment in *4PS*a. Rather, it has more of a sense of a place where the beings—the invisible forefather, two of the three triple-powered gods, and 24 invisible ones, except for Pistis Sophia—follow their assigned roles unquestioningly, according to the will of the First Mystery. Those beings that do not act within these strict bounds are punished, but outside of the thirteenth aeon itself—first Pistis Sophia for striving beyond herself, although her actions were in accordance with the ordinance of the First Mystery; then Authades and his minions, who are forbidden to return to the thirteenth aeon after they go to Chaos out of jealousy and lust for power.

invisible god's 24 invisible offspring. The thirteenth aeon is thus a decidedly inferior region in the grand scheme of the book; if terminological parallels to *ApJohn* may be made, one observes that the term "righteous" (ⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ) applies to one of Jaldabaoth's illegitimate sons by Eve (III 31,13; BG 62,12–14; II 24,19–20; IV 38,3). Referring to the region with a term that might have either positive or derogatory connotations depending on the background of the reader may be intentional: although in the *ApJohn* myth Sophia's place is in "the height," in the Jeuian reality that "height" is merely the pinnacle of the material universe, associated with the material rulers and detached from the true land of light.

Not only is this an inferior region, but its inhabitants have no clear route to salvation; even Pistis Sophia, who strives to reach the superior realm of light, only succeeds in maintaining her place in the thirteenth aeon. The other entities that dwell there are unable to recognize Jesus when he eventually arrives with their fallen sister, and they shake with agitation at his presence, as do the archons of the twelve aeons as he passes through them. Pistis Sophia has to sing his praises to her siblings so that they might know the wonders that he did for her (*2PS* 81[178–181]), because they are ignorant and incapable of recognizing the true light. Despite being termed a place of "righteousness" in this mythic context, the thirteenth aeon is a region of fear, ignorance, and powerlessness. Although arguments have been made for an overall positive view of this realm and its inhabitants,[10] evidence for such is extremely limited, as has here been demonstrated. It is more in fitting with the negative thirteenth realm found in certain other Gnostic texts, such as the *Gospel of Judas* (55,10–11),[11] the *Gospel of the Egyptians* (III 63,17–18; 64,3–4; IV 75,5–6; 18–19), the *Apocalypse of Adam* (82,10–19), or *Zostrianos* (4,25–28).

For the purposes of the myth, the twelve aeons serve purely as regions through which Pistis Sophia must descend to reach the low point of the Chaos, and to give structural parallel to the thirteen repentances she must recite to be forgiven and allowed to return to the thirteenth aeon. There is one reference that might suggest their typical role as seat of the archons that bind one to

10 For example M. Meyer, "The Thirteenth Daimon: Judas & Sophia in the *Gospel of Judas*," Chapman University, http://www.chapman.edu/wilkinson/religious-studies/_files/marv-meyer/13th_daimon_FINAL-11408.pdf. Accessed 11 June, 2015. For a refutation of his interpretation, see A.D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 165–168. H. Leisegang (*Die Gnosis* [Leipzig: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1924], 354, 362) goes so far as to suggest that the thirteenth aeon is the Midst, outside of the place of the left, to afford Pistis Sophia a place outside of the material realm, but this is not supported by the text.

11 See also A.D. DeConick, *The Thirteenth Apostle*, 163–164.

fate, but it is highly indirect (*2PS* 70[155]).[12] By contrast, the Chaos forms the setting for the majority of the story: apparently unable to torment her properly in the aeons, it is here that Authades lures Pistis Sophia to strip her of her power, and here that the emanations of Authades and Adamas torture her. Although Jaldabaoth is formed there, as has already been noted this seems to be solely to fulfill the requirement of the earlier myth this story is modifying; the focus of power among the evil ones is much more on Authades of the thirteenth aeon, and his own lion-faced power.

In the mythic terms, the Chaos appears to represent the world of men. While there are plenty of references to materiality in the Chaos, the association with this world is more directly suggested in Pistis Sophia's fifth repentance, as she says,

> Now at this time, O Light, wilt thou perhaps fulfil thy ordinance in the Chaos? And will the saviours, perhaps, who came according to thy ordinance, arise in the darkness and come and be disciples to thee? Will they, perhaps, say the mystery of thy name in the Chaos?
>
> *1PS* 41[69]

Near the beginning of *1PS*, it is explained that the disciples possess the powers of the twelve saviors of the Treasury of Light, which either Jesus himself cast into the wombs of the disciples' mothers (*1PS* 7[11]), or he sent them into the sphere of the archons, who then bound them into the disciples' mothers (*1PS* 8[14]). In either case, it is Jesus, representative of the Land of Light, who causes the power of the saviors to enter the disciples in the world. Furthermore, a mystery of a great name, associated with the Ineffable or the heights of the Treasury, is elsewhere in the Jeuian texts considered among the highest of mysteries, granting the one who knows it access to great knowledge or entry to the places of the Treasury (*4PS*a 136[354], 141[367]; *1 Jeu* B7(45),25–B10(48),3; *2 Jeu* B20(58),2–B21(59),17). The arrival of the saviors in the darkness of the Chaos, then, points to the coming of the disciples in the world and their provision of the mysteries of light to mankind.

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12 "... and thou didst give to me the authority that I should be released from the bonds of the emanations of the Adamas" (ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲕ† ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲍⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲣⲁⲃⲱⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲡⲁⲇⲁⲙⲁⲥ). If this whole myth is indeed an allegory for a soul's plight in the world, then the physical bonds with which she is afflicted in the Chaos could be analogous to the invisible bonds of fate in the world.

The association of the Chaos and Earth is made more explicit at the end of Pistis Sophia's story, when she is restored to the thirteenth aeon. Her siblings are agitated at Jesus' presence; they are ignorant of his identity, so Pistis Sophia sings a song of praise so that they might know "the wonders which I [Jesus] had done for her on the earth of mankind below, until I saved her" (*2PS* 81[178–179]). She wished "that they should know all the wonders which I had done for her. And she wished that they should know that I went to the world of mankind. I gave them the mysteries of the height" (*2PS* 81[181]). This clearly equates, or at least inextricably ties, the descent of Jesus into the world to save mankind with his descent into Chaos to save Pistis Sophia.

Taking into consideration the fact that this mythic story appears to be addressing a version of the Sethian myth, and thus to some extent expects its readers to be familiar with this story, a possible reason for this cosmological schema becomes apparent. In the Sethian myth, Sophia derives from the divine world, falling to the upper reaches of the material cosmos above the world before being restored. It is her divine power that enters into humanity, which must be awakened and returned to the divine place where it originated. The Sethian believer would see the Sophia story as being representative of his or her experience, and expect salvation by virtue of the knowledge that his divine element would return to the height. The Jeuians, by contrast, have demonstrated a consistent tendency to devalue the Sethian system, with varying degrees of obvious polemic. By virtue of taking the Sophia-heroine—representative of the Sethian believer's experience—and shifting her entire experience a level downward (beginning in the upper reaches of the material cosmos, and falling to the human world, only to be restored to the upper part of the material cosmos), it in essence demotes the whole of the Sethian belief system. The entire story of Sophia and her plight is presented as a circle within the lower material realms. The message is, *Sethian beliefs and practices are not divine, and cannot save you*. Sophia is not a divine power and is in fact ignorant and powerless; she does not impart a connection to the true height. Even if one, such as someone reading the *Pistis Sophia* out of curiosity, has a notion that there is something higher and more divine beyond what they have learned in their scriptures, that belief is useless without receiving the true Jeuian mysteries. Jesus gives these mysteries to the world of mankind through the saviors/disciples from whom the Jeuians claim their authority—not Pistis Sophia, the representative of Sethian Christianity.

4 Other Observations on the Pistis Sophia Myth

There are other subtle signs and inconsistencies in the text that suggest the mythic story is not native to the Jeuian system, and that point to its composition or compilation deriving from outside sources, sometimes in a haphazard manner.

4.1 *Repentances, Praises, and their Organization*

First, it has been observed that *1PS* appears to contain a full set of repentances. At the time of the thirteenth repentance, the text explicitly states the logic behind the number of repentances for representing a full process of restoration. Pistis Sophia cries out:

> O Light of Lights, I have transgressed against the twelve aeons. I came down from them. For this reason I have said the twelve repentances, one according to each aeon. Now at this time, O Light of Lights, forgive me my transgression, for it is very great. Because I left the places of the height. I came to dwell in the places of the Chaos.
>
> *1PS* 57[110]

Immediately thereafter she begins the thirteenth repentance, the first section of which states:

> Hear me as I sing praises to thee, O Light of Lights. Hear me as I say the repentance of the thirteenth aeon, the place from which I came down, so that the thirteenth repentance of the thirteenth aeon be completed. These (aeons) against which I have transgressed, from them I came down.
>
> *1PS* 57[110]

The repentances were meant as a fixed cycle of thirteen, representing the thirteen aeonic realms through which Pistis Sophia descended. When she completes this repentance, Jesus says,

> Now it happened when the Pistis Sophia said these words, the time was fulfilled that she should be brought forth from the Chaos. And by myself alone, without the First Mystery, I brought forth from myself a light-power. I sent it down to the Chaos that it should bring the Pistis Sophia up from the deep places of the Chaos and bring her to the upper place of the Chaos, until the command came forth from the First Mystery that she should be brought up from the Chaos completely.
>
> *1PS* 58[112]

There is some conflict here. The text has clearly stated that thirteen repentances are what were demanded of Pistis Sophia, for they represent each aeon through which she passed and transgressed in her fall. Indeed, even here it explicitly says that "the time was fulfilled that she should be brought forth from the Chaos." However, the text then backtracks, leaving her in the Chaos (but moved slightly) while further events unfold for a while. Over the course of these events involving Authades and Jesus' light power, Pistis Sophia sings songs of praise. Then, without any further repentance or action on Pistis Sophia's part, Jesus states,

> It happened when the Pistis Sophia said the thirteenth repentance, moreover at that hour the ordinance was completed of all the afflictions which had been ordained for the Pistis Sophia … And the time came that she should be saved from the Chaos and brought forth from all the darknesses. For her repentance was received by the First Mystery.
>
> *1PS* 60[118]

This seems to backtrack again, suggesting that as soon as she uttered the thirteenth repentance, the First Mystery deemed that she could be brought forth. This passage appears to belong immediately after the thirteenth repentance. The text that *does* follow that repentance, which inconsistently states that her time was fulfilled but that she was not yet allowed to be brought forth, seems to share more in common with the events that occurred after her seventh repentance: Jesus acts alone to help her, despite not having permission from the First Mystery to bring her out of the Chaos, by bringing her from the lower Chaos to the upper parts of the Chaos. It is possible that the compiler, knowing that the thirteenth repentance was to be followed by action of Jesus on Pistis Sophia's behalf, mistakenly placed this passage with Jesus' actions from the seventh repentance here from another source text out of order.

After the time comes for Pistis Sophia to be brought forth from the Chaos, there is a lengthy interlude of interpretations of Ps. 85 10–11, which have been discussed in Ch. 7. The story of Pistis Sophia is picked up again in *2PS*, but it, too, quickly loops back to the period before she was permitted to leave the Chaos. The style of the interpretations changes as well; while previously it essentially simply followed Pistis Sophia's repentance songs with verse-by-verse Psalm or Ode interpretations, now there is more prose along with hymnic sections. The disciples go on at length, giving a Psalm, then restating each section of the narrative and/or praise hymn with an explanation of how each verse of the Psalm reflects it.

The whole story from the thirteenth repentance until Pistis Sophia's final restoration becomes haphazard, as if the compiler suddenly realized he still had a great deal of material left over from his sources, some of it differing versions of the same events, but without an obvious way to include it all.

4.2 *Pistis Sophia or Sophia?*

A further notable sign for multiple foreign sources comes in the form of Pistis Sophia's name. Although this figure is usually referred to with the full name "Pistis Sophia," there are a handful of instances where she becomes simply "Sophia." Most often these are one-off cases, where the scribe may have simply accidentally skipped over the Pistis. There are two passages, however, that are noteworthy for having a high concentration of the shortened version: the opening and conclusion of the mythic section.

The first passage runs from the end of Ch. 30 through the conclusion of Ch. 31 [45–46], where she is called Sophia five consecutive times. Immediately prior to this section, the story tells that Authades emanated a lion-faced being and a variety of other emanations, and "he sent them to the places below, to the parts of the Chaos, so that they *should pursue the Pistis Sophia there* (ϵγϵϭωρϭ ϵⲧⲡⲓⲥⲧⲓⲥ ⲥⲟⲫⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ) and take her power from her, because she thought to go to the height which is above them all …" (*1PS* 30[44–45], emphasis mine). Under this plan, she would abandon her post purely out of persecution, and not out of willfulness or sin. When the name shifts to simply Sophia, the story changes and the concept of her willfulness is introduced: she looks below, sees Authades' counterfeit light creation, and herself decides to pursue it. It is also here that her decision to pursue the light is expressed in terms foreign to the Jeuian system, but at home in the *ApJohn* myth: "I will go to that place without my partner, and take the light, and create of it for myself aeons of light, so that I shall be able to go to the Light of Lights which is in the highest height" (*1PS* 31[45–46]).

This section is also the only place in *1/2PS* to refer to Jaldabaoth, and he appears solely in the context of Sophia having a role in his creation—another notion that seems absent in other Jeuian texts, and which serves little purpose here other than to include the important elements of the Sethian myth. As soon as the text begins the cycle of repentances and interpretations, which does not have a direct parallel with other known Sophia myths, Jaldabaoth disappears and the heroine's name returns to the full Pistis Sophia.

The second passage consists of seven consecutive instances from the end of Ch. 81 through the end of Ch. 82 [181–184]. There are another two instances in Ch. 81 which are separated from the main set of Sophia-only references by one use of the full name; it is possible these also belong to the following larger section where this version of the name is preferred. This section concludes the

story of Pistis Sophia in the text, covering her final song of praise, given so that her fellow invisible ones would know of the wonders the Savior did for her, and its interpretation.

Unlike the previous set, any elements adopted from known non-Jeuian systems are less obvious; in some ways it seems to contradict the earlier Sophia-only passage, as she states that her transgression was leaving her place (*2PS* 81[180])—not acting without her partner or attempting to create an aeon of light. Perhaps most striking is the fact that this passage cuts off the story of Adamas and his torments of Pistis Sophia: immediately prior to this, he had just begun his renewed assault on her, and she called out for help. After the interpretation of that call, Jesus says that he brought her into the thirteenth aeon—Adamas is not dealt with, and he is forgotten for the remainder of the story. This unceremonious deletion of the climactic final battle at the end of the ordained time suggests an untidy splicing of sources, and the switch to the shortened name several consecutive times at this point supports that supposition.

It is interesting that the story both opens and ends with extended passages using the shorter name, while in the main body the full name is much more common. Much of the mythic structure and material seems to be an effort to take a popular Sophia myth from the author/compiler's religio-cultural environment and rewrite or re-present it in a Jeuian light. At the very least this suggests that some of the important sources the compiler wished to address called the heroine of the myth Sophia, while the Jeuians preferred Pistis Sophia—as seen in the title given to at least one of the books (*2PS*, titled "The Second Book of the Pistis Sophia" in a late hand) and the only time a Sophia-figure appears elsewhere in the extant Jeuian texts (*4PS*a 137[356]).

4.3 *Authades and Adamas*

Out of all of the extant Jeuian texts, the figure of Authades appears only in the context of the Pistis Sophia myth in *1/2PS*[13]—a fact that is quite striking, given the important role he plays in that context, and the large amount of speculation that occurs in the other Jeuian texts about wicked beings, punishment realms, and to a lesser degree, the triple-powered ones. In the other extant Jeuian texts, (Sabaoth) the Adamas is the sole head of evil, ruling from the twelfth aeon. Why, then, does this otherwise unknown, would-be-ruler of the aeons suddenly appear in this myth but nowhere else?

13 With the exception of a passing reference at *2PS* 93[216], in the middle of a long list of elements contained in the knowledge of the mystery of the Ineffable.

First, it should be noted that Authades and Adamas are sometimes conflated in the Pistis Sophia myth. Although his origin in the thirteenth aeon is generally asserted, Authades is sometimes associated with the twelfth aeon (*1PS* 30[44]; 46[79–81—7th repentance]; *2PS* 67[145]), suggesting the possibility of a version of the story in which the persecutor is the ruler of the twelfth aeon, Adamas. In the present version, Authades is the exclusive villain in the myth until Adamas suddenly appears at *2PS* 66[138], apparently because the author/compiler perceived that there was an interpretive issue for the Psalm that was to be explained next: "Thou shalt not fear from terror by night and from an arrow that flies by day. From anything which walks in darkness; from a demonic blow at midday" (Ps. 91:5–6). Authades' power is said to represent the arrow flying by day, while Adamas arrives to give the demonic blow at midday. However, although in the story Authades' power comes from the thirteenth aeon, in the interpretation it is elaborated that Authades "is lord over the twelfth aeon and it is he who lights all the aeons; because of this he [David] has said 'the day'" (*2PS* 67[145]). Furthermore Adamas' "blow at midday" is called so because it comes from the twelfth aeon, "which is midday" (*2PS* 67[146]). It is clear that the author associated the twelfth aeon with symbol of daylight/midday, but he has confused the situation in trying to make this twelfth-aeon/Adamas metaphor fit with the antagonism by the ruler of the thirteenth aeon, Authades.

After this interpretive interlude, Adamas again disappears from an active role until near the end of the story, when Jesus explains to Pistis Sophia what will happen to her before he returns:

> … [W]hen the three times are now completed, the Authades and all his archons will oppress thee again to take away thy light from thee. He will be angry with thee, thinking that thou hast restrained his power in the Chaos, and thinking that thou hast taken away the light (of his power) from it. He will now be infuriated against thee to take away thy light from thee, so that he may send it down to the Chaos and put it into that emanation of his, so that it should have power to come out of the Chaos, and to come to his place. But Adamas will begin these things.
>
> *2PS* 76[170]

The narrative changes halfway through the telling—the name of the antagonist switches from Authades to Adamas. Authades does not appear again, with Adamas acting as oppressor for the remainder of the story. Although light-power was only removed from Authades' emanations (*2PS* 66[141]), at the ordained end time it is Adamas who looks and sees his emanations without

light and becomes furious (*2PS* 77[171–172]). This further supports the idea that a version of the story with Adamas as the primary antagonist also existed. As noted above, this final story arc is interrupted partway through and is never finished, eliminating any other textual clues regarding links between Adamas, Authades, and Pistis Sophia's final persecution.

It should be observed that "Authades" is used as another name or descriptor of Jaldabaoth in *ApJohn* (II 13,27; BG 46,1),[14] in the context of his removing power from his mother, Sophia.[15] It is possible that use of the name here is a conflation of this one figure in the earlier myth into two, in part based on *Pistis Sophia*'s confused view on the origin of evil and how Pistis Sophia got into the fallen situation in the first place. In the *ApJohn* myth, Sophia's error causes the creation of Jaldabaoth, which in turn leads to the creation of the world and evil. When he removes a power from Sophia, the *ApJohn* calls him Authades, arrogant, in his action. In the Jeuian worldview there is no such story of the origin of evil; all things came about through the plan of the Ineffable/First Mystery and the action of Jeu. Thus in the *Pistis Sophia* myth, the material aeons and world already exist, and the story begins with the removal of Pistis Sophia's power through the action of a being called Authades, following the *ApJohn* terminology. Then, her matter becomes Jaldabaoth, purely to follow the earlier myth; however this being plays no further role, because it is Authades who takes Jaldabaoth's position of jealous, aspiring god of the material world.

The fact that Authades appears only in the context of a story that is shown to have heavy influence from an outside myth—particularly *ApJohn*—and that in *ApJohn* the head of evil is briefly called Authades, although this is just another name for Jaldabaoth, suggests that the figure was adopted by the Jeuian authors specifically to further the parallels with the better-known Sethian story. That in the more traditional Jeuian system Authades did not exist would explain why this figure gets sometimes conflated with Adamas, who *does* have a rich mythological tradition as the primary universal villain in Jeuian texts. The fact that for the Jeuians Jaldabaoth was pointedly demoted to be simply a ruler of

14 See also *HypArch* 90,29; 92,27.

15 It should be noted that A. Marjanen observes this passage is apparently a secondary addition to an earlier account ("The Figure of Authades in the Nag Hammadi Documents," 572, in *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica: Mélanges Wolf-Peter Funk*, eds. L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier [Quebec: Les presses de l'Université Laval, 2005], 567–581). However, the fact that the *PS* is plainly a later document, and given the clear (and sometimes forced) parallels between the *PS* myth and the *ApJohn* story as it exists in the extant forms, it seems likely the compiler of the *PS* had access to a version of the myth that contained the reference to Authades.

one of the wicked aeons (*2 Jeu*) or punishment realms (*4PS*b, *3PS*), and did not have the same pivotal role as in the *ApJohn* or Sethian mythic tradition explains why his origin in the Pistis Sophia myth is added as an afterthought, and he does not appear again. The authors knew from the myth they were modifying that this figure needed to be included, but his story was foreign to his position in the Jeuian cosmos, so they fudged his inclusion and moved on.

5 An Earlier, Non-Sophia Jeuian Redemption Myth?

Whether the figure of Pistis Sophia and the entire myth relating to her were secondary additions to the Jeuian system is debatable: she does not appear in the earlier *Books of Jeu* texts, and the only reference to her outside of the mythic retelling in *1/2PS* is brief and lacks any indication of knowledge of such a story. It does, however, seem likely that the Jeuians had their own myth of redemption in the form of the story of Jabraoth and Sabaoth, the brother-leaders of the aeons found in *4PS*a 136[355–356], referred to briefly in John's interpretation of Ps. 85:10–11 (*2PS* 63[128]), *BC Frag 1* A4(38),19–22, and potentially alluded to in *2 Jeu* (the believing archons of the Little Midst in the 6th aeon; *2 Jeu* B41(79),17–B42(80),15).[16]

For this myth there is nothing equivalent to the in-depth telling of the story of Pistis Sophia; there are only a handful of references. However, this is enough to begin to piece together the theme of this earlier myth and how it fit into the Jeuian system. Here analysis will begin with the longest reference in *4PS*a, and then look at the other allusions.

The story states:

> For it happened, when the archons of the Adamas rebelled, and they continued to be concerned with sexual intercourse, begetting archons and archangels and angels and ministers and decans, then Jeu, the Father of my Father, came from the right. He bound them in a Heimarmene-sphere. For there were twelve aeons; Sabaoth, the Adamas, ruled over six, and Jabraoth, his brother, ruled over the other six. Now then Jabraoth believed in the mysteries of the light with his archons. And he practiced the mysteries of the light and he abandoned the mystery of sexual intercourse. But Sabaoth, the Adamas, with his archons, continued to practice sexual intercourse. And when Jeu, the Father of my Father saw that Jabraoth

16 There are also non-specific references to repentant archons at *2PS* 86–87[197–199], 93[215].

> believed, he carried him with all the archons which had believed with him, he received him to himself in the sphere, he took him to a purified air in the presence of the light of the sun, between the places of those of the Midst and between the places of the invisible god. He placed him there with the archons which had believed in him. And he carried Sabaoth, the Adamas, with his archons which did not practice the mysteries of the light but continued to practice the mysteries of sexual intercourse. He bound them within the sphere.
>
> *4PS*a 136[355–356]

The twelve cosmic aeons have split leadership. The half that follows Sabaoth the Adamas—also simply called Adamas, as he appears in the later texts—persists in practicing the mystery of sexual intercourse, and is punished by being imprisoned within the sphere of fate.[17] However, although much of the other texts focus on this figure and his wickedness, there is another very important character here. Sabaoth's brother Jabraoth ceases this mystery, believes in the light, and is redeemed, being lifted from his place in the aeons to the space between the thirteenth aeon and the Midst (ⲙⲉⲥⲟⲥ). Jabraoth thus presents a figure who can be lifted above his worldly condition through belief and practicing the mysteries of light—being moved out of the aeons and into the presence of light until such a time as it is decreed he can enter the Treasury. This presents a stark contrast to the Sophia myth of other Gnostic groups, where an already divine entity suffers a fall and eventual restoration to her original place in the divine order through either divine or her own intervention in the world; it also differs from the Pistis Sophia of *1/2PS*, who originates in the aeons, falls into Chaos, and only after much repenting is granted a return to her own place, still outside of the realm of light.

All other references are allusions to this basic story. The reference in *BC Frag 1* is in the midst of a hymn that refers to the highest god as the First Mystery, terminology found primarily in the later *1/2PS* texts, while also reflecting the founding Jeuian notion in the earlier texts that Jeu established the aeons. After stanzas praising the First Mystery in relation to each aeon, culminating in the thirteenth aeon, there is a final stanza of praise that refers to "all the archons with Jabraoth, who have believed in the Kingdom of the Light, in a place of pure air …" This passage directly reflects the story and language expressed in *4PS*a.

In *2 Jeu*, there is apparently a mixed reference: the archons of the 6th aeon, or "Little Midst," have a little goodness in them and believe, but it is the three

17 See Section 4.2.5.

archons or triple-powered gods who have been elevated out of the aeons and into the space in or before the Midst. This may be confusion on the part of the author, knowing that archons relating to six aeons were moved to a space near the Midst, and also given the 5/7 split in the way the aeons are discussed here, possibly reflecting the cosmic viewpoint found in some Sethian texts. That the author did not fully grasp the aeonic system is demonstrated in his inclusion of a "fourteenth aeon" to accommodate prayers to both the invisible god and his 24 emanations, which elsewhere always both occupy the thirteenth aeon, even when they are addressed separately.[18] Regardless, *2 Jeu* demonstrates that a notion of specific material archons receiving the mysteries of light, being lifted from the aeons, and moving to the intermediary realms is present at this very early stage in Jeuian development.

Finally, in *2PS* while interpreting Ps. 85:10, "Mercy and truth have met one another, and righteousness and peace have kissed one another," John gives one thread of interpretation that relates to the descent of the First Mystery and the power of Sabaoth the Good. However, for the second two terms, he gives an additional line of reasoning: for righteousness he tells Jesus, "And thou didst come to the place of the archons, thou didst give to them the mysteries of the height and they became righteous and good;" then for the notion of peace he says, "And all the archons of the six aeons of Jabraoth have made peace with the mystery of the light" (*2PS* 128).

This reference to a story of the redemption of certain archons of the aeons is particularly striking, coming as it does as an interlude in the story of Pistis Sophia's fall and restoration—given that Pistis Sophia, an entity of an aeon, does not receive the full mysteries of light, and is not permitted to rise above her station. In these texts John is particularly acknowledged as blessed and enlightened among the disciples, and here he alludes to the knowledge of this myth with its tale of higher redemption in the midst of the story of Pistis Sophia's flawed efforts to reach the light through praise and repentance. Although there are parallels—both Pistis Sophia and Jabraoth are raised from a low point to a higher one to await entry to their rightful place—for the former she can only aspire to be restored to her place within the aeons, while the latter receives the mysteries and is raised out of the material realm, waiting to enter the true kingdom of light.

The Sophia myth of other Gnostic systems is foreign to Jeuian sensibilities. The Jeuians have no myth of the origin of evil. The material world is natural and arose according to the plan of the Ineffable One, the highest god,

18 See Section 2.2.3.

through Jeu, the emanator of the Treasury of Light and organizer of the cosmos. The Sabaoth/Jabraoth myth serves as an example of the paths available to the human being in Jeuian thought: receiving the mysteries of light, or not bothering to pursue them. There is no fall from on high, and man is not created out of ignorance or jealousy; things exist according to the natural order. Jabraoth represents a figure who originates outside the divine world—the aeons representing the material universe—and who achieves redemption simply through rejecting certain practices and instead learning and practicing the mysteries of light. This is perhaps a better parallel for the Jeuian view of the human condition: right living and receiving the mysteries of light are what is required to gain a place in the Treasury of Light.[19] Those who persist in wrong living and do not receive the mysteries are destined to remain trapped in the world of fate.

6 Summary

The inclusion of the myth of Pistis Sophia is clearly a response to the religious environment of the compiler(s). Appeals to more mainstream scriptural texts that may have been popular with competing Christian Gnostic groups, in this case the Psalms and Odes of Solomon, become more prevalent and obvious. The story of Sophia in various forms was common to many different Gnostic branches, and it seems at least one such branch was a major rival to the Jeuians. To maintain relevance, the Jeuians had to address the popular myth—and they do so, but in such a way that it loses all of the power it had. In keeping with the demotion of the Sethian divinities found in all of the Jeuian texts, they reduce the main character from a divine but flawed figure into a mere entity of the thirteenth material aeon. Although like the Sophia of other stories she ultimately is restored to her place, that place remains within the material cosmos and not in the divine realm; she plays no role in the creation of a demiurge, the world, or man.

The deliberate, sometimes forced similarities in this version to its Sethian counterpart probably served to hold the attention of people familiar with the

19 C. Schmidt associates the Jabraoth myth with reinforcing a notion that sincere repentance (μετάνοια) receives an appropriate reward (*Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* [TU 8, Leipzig, 1892], 393); however, note that the story as it is told in *4Ps*a does not say Jabraoth *repents*—he simply rejects what is wrong and believes what is right, as does the true believer. This is in contrast to Pistis Sophia, who repents at length and is rewarded only with restoration to her place prior to sinning. Transgression requires repentance, but reward comes only with practicing the mysteries.

Sethian myth, and to introduce them to the way things *really* are—i.e., the Jeuian system—gradually. Certainly the dramatic shift of Sophia from a high being to a mere material entity would be striking—but it might not be entirely apparent only from reading the myth itself, where the higher realms remain unmentioned. *1/2PS* were meant to be read by the newest members, or perhaps those just beginning to think about this group. It is clear that the Sethians, or a similar Christian Gnostic group, had already achieved a much greater level of success in the Jeuian's religio-cultural environment—the earliest Jeuian texts engage with Sethian figures and concepts, but in an extremely polemical way; however, later texts tone down the polemical aspects while still subtly implying the superiority of the Jeuian system. The incorporation of this myth could be a tool to boost interest of those already familiar with the Sethian version, with the promise of a truer or more accurate interpretation. The story of Pistis Sophia is a message to Sethians or those interested in the Sethian worldview: that the entire basis of their belief system is flawed, based on the story of a minor material entity that ultimately remains mired in the world. Even though their intentions might be good—Pistis Sophia strives after the light—it *cannot be reached without the mysteries of light*, which only the Jeuians are in a position to offer.

Part 3: Summary

The final thematic section is the one most likely intended to be read first: *1/2PS* are introductory texts, outlining the information that is key for true salvation without giving away the details. More specific materials would have been reserved for those who persevered in the group's way of life and proved themselves worthy. These texts were most likely meant for those unfamiliar with Jeuian teaching and practice, but who perhaps had some knowledge of other forms of Gnostic Christianity. They make claims to apostolic and Scriptural authority, as well as addressing the Sethian myth of Sophia at great length; these elements suggest that there was a strong Christian Gnostic presence in the authors' cultural environment, and that the Jeuians wished to attract new members among those who were familiar with the teachings of other such groups. By taking well-known stories and passages from other Christian Gnostic groups or texts, demeaning their original message, and presenting a higher or true interpretation through a Jeuian lens, it might be possible to attract those already interested in another form of Christianity with the suggestion of a higher truth beyond what was available to other teachers or rituals.

Since these texts had the goal of introducing Jeuian concepts and explaining away well-known elements from other religious groups to attract potential new membership, the strict codes of moral and ethical conduct found in the texts of Section 2 are lacking. If the reader's interest was serious, he or she would begin to receive instruction in proper living, but here the concern is to claim access to higher teachings, and to sow the seeds of thought that anything taught by other groups proclaiming Jesus as savior is incomplete at best, and inaccurate or misleading at worst. These texts attempt to establish the Jeuians as the sole representatives of true Christianity. Thus from the very beginning it is established that Jesus only began to reveal the true mysteries eleven years after the resurrection—necessarily demeaning records of his teaching in life, as well as those of other groups purporting to discuss his post-resurrection actions and appearances. While these texts feature an increased number of quotes or references to more mainstream scriptures, including liberal use of the Psalms and Odes of Solomon, these references are generally then interpreted through a distinctly Jeuian lens. The idea was to show the true meaning behind the earlier, more widely-known passages, and demonstrate the superiority of the Jeuian message. The texts also establish a threefold Jeuian gospel, the number of which is itself justified through scripture, composed by Matthew, Thomas, and Philip.

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The importance of cosmology in the Jeuian system as a whole is evident in the strong role it plays in these introductory texts. Much of the non-mythic text is devoted to outlining the various cosmological realms. A great deal of importance is placed on understanding the hierarchy of regions: other Christian Gnostic groups only have access to knowledge regarding the lower, material places. Beyond these are the middle realm, the place of judgment, followed by the Treasury of Light and the places of the inheritance. The importance of entering the inheritances to escape the cycle of material rebirth is stressed—and the threat of destruction at the end of the eon for those who fail to do so is given. In presenting this situation, it reinforces the point that the only way to enter these higher realms—which is the sole way to achieve salvation—is to receive the mysteries that the Jeuians alone possess, having been taught them directly by Jesus in his true garment that came down long after the records of other Christian groups cease.

Here the roles different cosmological regions play in the formation of humans are also emphasized—both the material realms for the typical human being, and the middle and light realms for key well-known figures such as Jesus and the disciples. Attributing higher spiritual elements from the Jeuian system to these figures bolsters their reliability as bearers of the true mysteries, as well as adding further justification for the variety of cosmological realms. In particular, establishing Jesus' origins and lineage is considered vital, and several interpretations of his threefold composition are accepted. His body is formed from material of the thirteenth aeon; in place of an archontic soul, he bears a power from the place of the right, representative of a middle realm; and from the true heights he possesses Spirit. Despite possessing all these elements, however, it is also established that he did not receive his true garment with all of the mysteries until the time of his ascent in the eleventh year after his resurrection—denying the possibility of salvation based on any of his teachings or actions prior to that time. Furthermore, given the Sethian polemic found in these texts it is perhaps noteworthy that the Barbelo, one of the high deities in Sethian mythology, provides his material body—his lowest element.

Where Sethian polemic was subtle or muted in *3PS* and *4PS*b, here it is in full force. The myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and resurrection is a striking example of taking a well-known Sethian teaching tool, and suggesting that its entire substance has been previously misrepresented. While the Sophia myth is well-known from various Gnostic circles as presenting the story of a divine being becoming entrenched in matter through error, and that being's struggle to regain her true place in the divine realm—in so doing presenting an allegory for the soul of the believer in the world—in *1/2PS*, this figure is reduced to a mere material entity who is completely passive, and who is incapable

of entering the true heights of existence. Moreover, the *1/2PS* myth appears to be specifically paralleling the version found in *ApJohn*, perhaps the most popular or well-known of the Sethian texts; it is thus targeting basic Sethian teachings that would have been widespread, and presenting them as shallow and ineffective for true salvation.

1/2PS are the latest of the Jeuian texts, written in a religious climate apparently quite different from the earliest texts. In addition to increased competition from other groups, or perhaps in response to this, reforms or changes have occurred in Jeuian practice. While these texts clearly embrace the core of mysteries and soteriology that characterize the Jeuian system, they also suggest that some earlier mysteries are no longer necessary. In an increasingly complicated cosmology, thoughts on the visible stars and astrology have furthermore undergone potent changes: while early on the visible universe and its forces were viewed as neutral and natural, it seems that with increasingly strong competition in their religio-cultural environment, a more negative interpretation was adopted. Despite all of this, a close reading reveals that very strong ties with the patterns and structures found in the *Books of Jeu* are still present and considered vital to the authors. New members would not be able or allowed to scrutinize the group's innermost ritual manuals, and thus these introductory texts use language and stories more accessible to the uninitiated but curious reader in an environment where Gnostic Christianity is common. Only once worthiness was shown would the initiate be gradually guided to the higher mysteries.

Conclusions

The Books of Jeu and the *Pistis Sophia*, not fitting in with any of the main pagan, Gnostic or other Christian groups known through heresiological evidence, have long been overlooked by scholarship. This book set out to examine these Coptic Gnostic texts, to determine whether a consistent system might be found within them in their own right. By critically reading each of the texts in the chronological order proposed in this book—from earliest to latest, *1 Jeu, 2 Jeu, 4PS*a, *4PS*b, *3PS*, and finally *1* and *2PS*—a coherent theogonic and cosmological ideology has been demonstrated, with evolution over the period of their composition and collection becoming apparent. It has been argued that these texts belonged to a distinct religious group writing and practicing in approximately third to fourth century Egypt, with their own complex and developing system of cosmology, baptismal or initiation rituals, liturgical prayers, mythological speculation, and religious and ethical prescriptions and proscriptions. As this research has shown, their texts and practices deserve to be studied in their own right.

The codices were most likely compiled at some point after the texts' original composition, and the texts as we have them are themselves compilations from other sources. Occasionally the compiler of a particular text has preserved multiple, slightly differing accounts of the same outline or event within the same text, as with the lists of mysteries in *2 Jeu* and *1/2PS*, or the descriptions of Jesus' ascent through the hostile archontic realms in *1PS*. It is thus apparent that beyond the texts that are preserved today, a larger number of texts or traditions existed originally. However, despite the slight variations in these accounts, or even apparently larger shifts between texts, a remarkable consistency underlies the core of this whole body of works. It has been shown that between *1 Jeu* and *1* and *2PS*—those texts with the largest temporal gap and apparent variation in cosmological outlook—in fact, the core of the mysteries needed for salvation and their outline is essentially the same, but clothed in different language. The mysteries of the Treasury of Light in the first texts are the mysteries of the First Mystery and the Ineffable in the last.

1 Religio-Cultural Factors

The reason for the changes in terminology and the veiling of the role or nature of certain figures and concepts is explicable through an analysis of the way outside religious themes and ideas are adopted or presented in the texts. The

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group that created these texts arose in an Egyptian context, with strong astrological leanings and perhaps maintaining traces of ideas associated with earlier Osiris worship. Early on they had encounters with Sethian Gnostics, whose theology they considered inferior or erroneous, but threatening enough to require response. Thus, the names of the Sethian high trinity were incorporated in the outline of the material realms to show their inferiority, and their heads of evil were made into minor demons surpassed with ease (*2 Jeu*). They apparently also had interactions with Manichaean views that were more positive, with Manichaean language of light collection from the archons also appearing early in the *Pistis Sophia* texts. Some authors incorporated names or words found in popular Greek magical texts, but this was relatively limited in scope (*4PS*a and *4PS*b).

Over time, Sethian influence in the group's cultural environment apparently increased; as a result the Jeuians utilized different techniques in their attempts to maintain a competitive edge in the changing religious climate. Sometimes they incorporated various Sethian elements with minimal polemic (*4PS*b and *3PS*), other times presenting them with subtle subversive twists (*1/2PS*). The most noteworthy of these later instances is the adaptation of the myth of Pistis Sophia's fall and redemption: her story is kept in many ways similar to what was probably the most popular version, found in *ApJohn*, but with all of the characters shifted downward, so that the entire series of events takes place with material beings in the cosmos rather than incorporating entities from the highest divine realms. By keeping this popular story familiar, but implying that higher truths exist beyond the world of Sophia, it is possible that they hoped to entice readers or listeners to want to learn more about the real truth and salvation offered by the Jeuian leaders. However, despite all of these surface additions or modifications allowed over time, ultimately the innermost, core Jeuian system of mysteries and soteriology remained the same.

It is noteworthy that in this multivalent religious climate, there is very little sign of interaction with more catholic Christian groups or ideas. Although Matthew's gospel is referenced frequently and is acknowledged as a recorder of Jesus' words and actions, the other three gospels are used minimally, and Paul is referenced only once, suggesting the wider corpus of New Testament texts were not particularly popular. The Old Testament is similarly passed over, with the exception of the use of several Psalms for the interpretation of a Gnostic Christian myth in the latest texts. No importance is ascribed to Jesus' birth, death, or resurrection, and all of his true teachings are said to have been revealed only over a decade after his resurrection. Baptism is very important to this group, but their baptismal rituals show little connection to any of the elements or symbolism associated with known versions of the

catholic Christian rite. There are attempts to claim apostolic authority for their teachings, but both the disciples attributed to recording Jesus' words (Matthew, Thomas, and Philip) and the most blessed disciple (Mary) suggest non-catholic Christian influence. This seems to suggest that the group developed apart from nascent catholic Christianity, in a place where other Gnostic Christianities were flourishing.

2 Organization of the Texts

All of this sheds some light on the development of the group's thought and strategy in a varied religious climate. The organization of the texts themselves goes on to provide clues about how the texts would have been used by group members. As noted above, this book has discussed each text in the proposed chronological order for the original composition of their contents, from the earliest to latest texts, to help explain some of the developments or shifts in thought or language. This chronology of ideas shows how a primarily Egyptian group with apparently little knowledge of Christian texts or ideas, catholic or otherwise, gradually responded to increased Christian Gnostic influence in their cultural environment, adopting ideas as they could be fit within their greater scheme, or countering more threatening ideas with polemical interpretations. However, this ordering also allowed the texts to be grouped into thematic sections.

The oldest texts present the core rituals and cosmological mysteries that serve as the primary unifying element of the Jeuian group. They are ritual manuals designed to be used by officiating priests, those already baptized and otherwise initiated. The instructions for how to ascend through both the aeons and the many Treasuries of Light were most likely intended to be studied and memorized, perhaps over a long period. The baptismal rituals were probably also carried out in a sequence over time, with additional instruction required after each baptism.

The middle texts are concerned with instructions on proper conduct for the follower who has not yet been initiated. This material often takes the form of warnings about the punishments awaiting those who transgress the ethical lifestyle code of the group, so that the would-be initiate acts appropriately to remain worthy of receiving the mysteries. *3PS* also makes a number of other things clear: first, that the Jeuian group has a duty, assigned to the disciples by Jesus, to attempt to reach and convert as many people as possible; second, that there are many pitfalls to maintaining worthiness of the mysteries; and third, that there are still opportunities for one who has sinned or fallen away to be

redeemed—even after death. This shows a broad proselytizing tendency: this is not a secret, elite mystery religion, but rather the mysteries are needed by all, even the righteous. This type of material may be helpful for a neophyte working toward his or her first baptism, to bolster confidence in the group's path and hope in the face of personal trials or failures.

The latest texts are those targeting beginners, with very little concrete mystery information or strange new mythology. They tantalize with the suggestion of mysteries and knowledge higher than anything known by other Christian groups, claiming that the true knowledge was held back for years after the resurrection. These mysteries are only accessible through adherence to the Jeuian group's ethical code, purifying the individuals to be made worthy of the higher knowledge. The incorporation of perhaps the best-known myth of Sophia's fall and redemption serves to interest those familiar with the story, while subverting the story's entire message, and subjecting all of its characters below the deities held by the Jeuians. This would shock Sethian readers or hearers, but perhaps also intrigue them about the higher light that the text says Sophia cannot reach, but humans can.

By recognizing these thematic segments, the order of the texts in the *Pistis Sophia*—apparently chronologically backwards—makes sense. The first texts (*1/2PS*) are introductory, to entice a potential convert to want to learn more. The middle texts (*3PS*, and *4PS*b at the end) are for those who are Jeuian followers, but who have not yet been permitted to receive any of the baptisms. They give the reader instructions on how to live, motivation to maintain worthiness, and hope and encouragement in cases of personal failure. Crucially, up to this point the mysteries required for salvation from the lower realms are mentioned, but not explained—the initiate has to prove himself worthy through right living. Finally, the last text (*4PS*a) is intended for one who is about to undergo his or her first baptism. It includes some moral instruction, but primarily it gives uniquely Jeuian explanations about how and why the world is the way it is, as well as presenting a basic outline of what to expect for the first baptism—but only the first baptism, while acknowledging that two more baptisms await. Read from beginning to end, the *Pistis Sophia* takes a new follower all the way from first encountering the Jeuian teachings all the way to his or her first initiation. It is a manual for a beginning initiate.

As has been explored throughout this book, there are of course some inconsistencies among these texts—which is to be expected, as they were written over a period of some time, and the Jeuians evolved in their environment. However, this proposal would explain why these texts were put in this order at the time they were compiled into this manuscript, well after their original composition. The addition of 4PSb at the end remains a puzzle, but some possibilities

are 1) it is quite short, so it may have been included at the end to take up some extra space left over in the codex, and 2) there is a lacuna between the end of 4PSa and the beginning of 4PSb, which may have given further clues to its inclusion, now lost.

Furthermore, looking to the purpose of the texts may explain the collection of *1* and *2 Jeu* together in the Bruce Codex, since both are manuals of the highest rituals and knowledge of this group; BC *Frag 2* seems to reflect a soul journey similar to that described in *2 Jeu*, and BC *Frag 1* presents hymnic material that may have been used by group leaders in worship. Overall these texts give a ritual and liturgical guide for a variety of occasions, and access to them most likely would have been reserved for ritual officiants and other fully initiated individuals. However, since the Bruce Codex also contains other texts not related to the Jeuians, this is harder to establish with certainty. It is likely the codex was compiled well after the texts' original composition, and perhaps after the practitioners that held them sacred had faded away. This might explain these most sacred of books being lumped together with outside works.

3 Jeuian Teaching, Life, and Practice

It remains now to review the nature of the group that produced these texts, here called the Jeuians after their allocation of the role of cosmocrator to the being called ⲓⲉⲟⲩ. Speculation about cosmology dominates much of these texts: the mysteries providing the keys to ascend through the cosmos were of utmost importance to this group, so knowledge of the cosmic outline was also vital. They acknowledged essentially three main divisions to the universe: the place of the left, or the material realms including the stars, planets, and sublunar realms; the place of the right, or the Treasury or Kingdom of Light; and the Midst, or the intermediate realm between the two. There is some variation in the specifics of this outline between texts, but these basic subsets appear to remain essentially the same. Contrary to the teachings of some Gnostic groups, in the early stages of the Jeuian texts, the visible stars are considered the ultimate destination of the soul, reflecting their Egyptian background. Although in the later texts a more negative view of the starry realms is adopted, the structure of the divine abodes where the initiate ascends after death remains the same. It is because of this shift that Jeu's position appears to be in flux: as the one who organized the visible cosmos, he is initially portrayed as second only to the unapproachable god (and perhaps Jesus), while later this identical role of cosmic organization is degraded. As noted above, however, despite changes

in language used to refer to the highest realms, their structure and contents appear to remain essentially the same from beginning to end, and Jeu's ultimate destiny lies in the Kingdom of Light.

This group believed there was only one way to achieve salvation: the mysteries of light that give access through the various cosmic realms to ascend to the height. These mysteries were what Jesus came into the world to deliver, and only this group can provide them. Prior to receipt of the mysteries, however, one had to demonstrate belief and dedication to the group's precepts through a lengthy initial period of living according to their strict moral code. After a sufficient period, a complex series of baptisms or purification rites were required, which were administered to groups of initiates at a time. These involved incense offerings, seals, prayer, and ritual meals of bread and wine for the initiates. It is likely that these rituals were carried out over a period of some time, with additional instruction required after each baptism. Hymns and group prayers were also a key part of the group's practice, with several of these recorded for liturgical use. After being thus purified, group members were taught a series of magical names, numbers and seals for use in postmortem ascension, which may or may not have been meditatively practiced in life as well. These mystical passwords and diagrams were classified into different types, and are recorded in great detail in *1* and *2 Jeu*. Although they are lacking in the *Pistis Sophia* texts, their use is passively referenced and still assumed.

In the middle to later stages, there is indication that this group was persecuted for its beliefs, bolstering a sense of identity among its practitioners. This was a group that was very concerned with mission and community, as well as right living and practice. Transgressing the ethical and moral rules of the group at any stage before or after receiving these mysteries did not automatically cause one to be cast out: the system had provisions to allow for second chances, both in this life and the next. People who received the mysteries but transgressed could receive higher mysteries to wipe out past sin, and the mystery of the Ineffable could forgive any wrong. For those who lived righteously but did not find the mysteries, it was believed they would be reincarnated into a wise body that would certainly find them. For those who lived in wickedness, after a period of intense punishment, they, too, would be reincarnated and given a chance to find the light. These characteristics serve to demonstrate that these texts are the product of a group with a defined structure and system of beliefs and practices.

As noted above, the codices remaining today were likely compiled well after the composition of the original texts, by scribes who may or may not have been members of the group that originally produced them. Despite this, the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia* in their current form still present a relatively sizable

body of information about a separate, unique group with a distinct system of beliefs and practices. This book has demonstrated that they feature a largely consistent cast of divine figures and cosmological theory, and where deviations occur, possible explanations within a wider cultural context have been shown. Throughout all of the texts, receipt of the mysteries of light combined with adherence to a strict moral code remained the only way to attain a positive afterlife. Despite the superficial changes or additions stemming from interactions with surrounding religious and cultural phenomena over time, these processes seem to have maintained their basic form. In light of this overview of these texts' structure and contents, perhaps they may become better appreciated as important historical, religious documents emerging from the dynamic religious climate of the first centuries of the Common Era.

APPENDIX 1

The Jeuian System: Cosmologies

The issue of Jeuian cosmology is a complicated one. As the texts were written over a period of time, certain ideas changed, and realms could be added, removed, or their purposes altered. Each text presents a different piece of the overall structure, and that structure changes as the focus and cultural environment of the group changes. A few scholars have attempted to present a coherent outline for the cosmology of the *Pistis Sophia*, with perhaps the clearest being those by C. Schmidt[1] and G.R.S. Mead, shown in the following table.[2]

These outlines give a perhaps over-simplified idea of the Jeuian cosmic structure, by incorporating all of the cosmological elements ever appearing in these texts, without distinguishing the different cosmological phases actually found in the each individual text. The second table presents the full cosmological picture found in each individual text, which is necessary for an understanding of the stages of development in the group's view of the soteriological process.

1 *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1892), 347–348.

2 *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1905; reprint: New York: University Books, 1960), 574–575.

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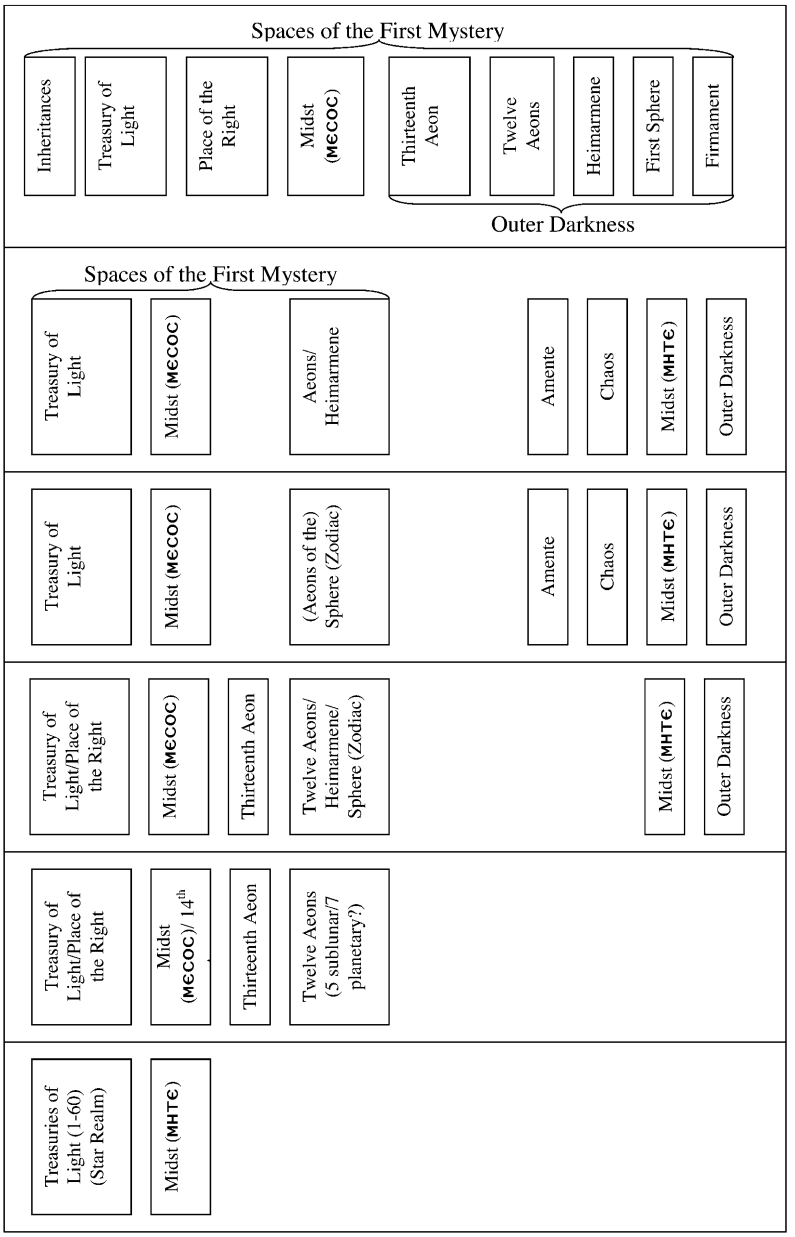
C. Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 347–348	**G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, 574–575**
	The Ineffable The limbs of the Ineffable
I. The Highest Light-world or the Kingdom of Light a. The χωρηματα of the Ineffable b. The two χωρηματα of the First Mystery	I. The Highest Light-world, or the Kingdom of Light a. The First Space of the Ineffable b. The Second Space of the Ineffable, or the First Space of the First Mystery c. The Second Space of the First Mystery
II. The Higher Light-world a. The Treasury of Light i. The προβολαι of the Light ii. The Taxeis of the Taxeis b. The Place of the Right c. The Place of the Midst	II. The Higher (or Middle) Light-world a. The Treasure of Light b. The Place of the Right c. The Place of the Midst
III. The Lower Light- or Aeon-world a. The place of the left i. The 13 aeons ii. The είμαρμενη iii. The σφαιρα iv. The Archons of the Midst v. The στερεωμα b. The Cosmos, esp. humanity c. The Underworld i. Amenti ii. Chaos iii. Outer Darkness	III. The Lower Light- or Aeon-world (The Mixture of Light and Matter) a. The Place of the Left i. The Thirteenth Aeon ii. The Twelve Aeons iii. The Fate iv. The Sphere v. The Rulers of the Ways of the Midst vi. The Lower Firmament b. The World of Men c. The Under-world i. Amenti ii. Chaos iii. Outer Darkness


Treasuries of Light (1-60) (Star Realm)
Midst (MHTE)
Treasury of Light/Place of the Right
Midst (MECOC)/ 14th
Thirteenth Aeon
Twelve Aeons (5 sublunar/7 planetary?)
Treasury of Light/Place of the Right
Midst (MECOC)
Thirteenth Aeon
Twelve Aeons/ Heimarmene/ Sphere (Zodiac)
Midst (MHTE)
Outer Darkness
Treasury of Light
Midst (MECOC)
(Aeons of the) Sphere (Zodiac)
Amente
Chaos
Midst (MHTE)
Outer Darkness
Spaces of the First Mystery
Treasury of Light
Midst (MECOC)
Aeons/ Heimarmene
Amente
Chaos
Midst (MHTE)
Outer Darkness
Spaces of the First Mystery
Inheritances
Treasury of Light
Place of the Right
Midst (MECOC)
Thirteenth Aeon
Twelve Aeons
Heimarmene
First Sphere
Firmament
Outer Darkness
1 Jeu
2 Jeu
4 PSa
4 PSb
3PS
1/2 PS
Regions attainable by the soul

APPENDIX 2

Ranks of the Treasury of Light (*2 Jeu* B32(70),4–B37(75),32): Full List

This is the longest of lists of ranks in the Treasury of Light found in any of the texts, and it did not entirely fit in Table 2.1 in either size or overall contents. The first part of the list was included in the table because it demonstrates that the main ranks found in all of the lists are present. However, the majority of entries on this list are unique within the *Books of Jeu*. It is interesting that this list is the only place to mention the Great Sabaoth and the Great Jao in the whole of the *Books of Jeu*, despite their important roles in the *Pistis Sophia*. The list likely represents a deviant tradition, similar to that found in the list of knowledge of the Mystery of the Ineffable (Table 7.1); in fact, although they are not apparently directly related, the two share some elements that are not found elsewhere in the texts. The list is included here for reference and completeness.

- 9 Watchers of ToL
- 3 Amens
- Child of the Child
- Great Sabaoth (of ToL)
- Great Jao the Good (of ToL)
- 7 Amens
- 5 Trees/Unmoved Trees
- 7 Voices
- Incomprehensible Ones
- Endless Ones
- Pre-hyper Incomprehensible Ones
- Pre-hyper Endless Ones
- Undefiled Ones
- Pre-hyper Undefiled Ones
- Unmoved Ones
- Hyper-Unmoved Ones
- Fatherless Ones
- Pre-fatherless Ones
- 5 Incisions
- 3 Spaces
- 5 Helpers of ToL
- Triple-spirited Ones
- Triple-powered Ones (of great king of ToL)
- First Ordinance
- Inheritance
- Silence + Rest
- Veils (before king of ToL)
- Great Man/King of ToL/Jeu
- Place surrounding ToL (+ Jeu again)
- Gates of 2nd ToL + Watchers
- Triple-powered ones (names given)
- 12th Rank of 12th Great Emanation (of True God)
- True God
- Unapproachable God (unreachable)

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